

How higher education pays off for full time mothers

by Susan Fischer

My sister and I are both alumnae of Franciscan University, and both have, for a time, put aside our professional careers to stay home and raise our small children. Our aunt recently asked our mother if she regretted paying for our college education since we are now unemployed.

This raises the question of whether higher education is no more than training for a professional career. Or, to put it another way: Is a woman wasting her parents' money and her professors' time if she ends up staying at home with her kids?

When I arrived at the University, at the age of eighteen, I had no intention of being a "stay-at-home mom." Now, ten years and two kids later, this is the occupation I have chosen. Does this mean my decision to go to college was a mistake? I don't believe so. My education provided me with occupational skills and a time for personal enrichment and academic challenge which have served me very well ever since.

After graduation, I was em-

ployed for five years as an advertising coordinator for a newspaper while my husband was a full-time law student. It would have been impossible for him to attend law school without my income. My training in journalism and advertising was used for the good of the family. (I should note that, had my husband not been free to go to law school, I might not now have the financial freedom to stay at home caring for my children full-time.) But even now that I am no longer working, I often see how my college experience benefits my children. My world was expanded, and I am in a better position to expand theirs. My husband and I often share our love of classic literature and poetry.

Beyond these things, every married

woman should seriously consider the terrible possibility of her husband's dying early or becoming disabled or unemployed. Who would support the family? Would they be forced to rely on government aid? Unfortunately, today's job-market virtually necessitates a college degree for any professional employment; employers almost automatically weed out those without degrees and experience. A formal education along with previous job experience would be a great help to any woman in such dire circumstances. I know my journalism degree along with five years of job experience would enable me to find a job quickly, if it became necessary.

My personal reasons for accepting the privilege of staying at home with my children are varied. Most important is the sense that time is a great enemy to us parents. It steals our babies and changes them into adults before our eyes. There will always be time for a career, but my children's childhood is passing quickly, and it is a beautiful, innocent time to

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The challenge of the Concourse: discussion without (much) contention

The last two weeks have seen something of a shake-down and re-grouping in the cyberspace headquarters of the *Concourse* editorial board.

When the managing editor and the editor-in-chief blithely picked up and moved overseas, we knew there would be adjustments to make, but we had not fully accounted for the abysmal difference between the face-to-face deliberations of regular board meetings and the (relatively) clumsy and incomplete communication of the internet. Nor had we anticipated how many toilsome practical hurdles would have to be cleared before we were off and running smoothly.

In trying to reorganize our operations, re-define our various functions, and concentrate our energies, I have had much reflecting and articulating to do about our specific “vision” for the *Concourse* and its place at the University. It was essential to clarify this, if we were to be able to answer in the affirmative the question that has (I imagine) stealed at times into all our minds: “Is it worth the cost?”

We can give a great deal only for what we perceive is worth a great deal.

If our journal were to be nothing more than your average, run-of-the-mill, college-paper opinion-page, I for one, would not bother with it. I am dedicated to the *Concourse* because I see as something more than this—something more valuable, more vital and more wholesome—as different from your typical college journal as Franciscan University is from your typical college. Its pages are meant

to reflect her nature; to partake in her unique ethos of profound faith, humble plainness and evangelical zeal.

Still, all our noble aims notwithstanding, we have been intensely aware lately of how easily the journal might devolve into something we do not want: a sort of academic gripe sheet; a place where intellectuals with axes to grind or chips on their shoulders could test their rhetorical mettle against their opponents—real or imaginary. We cannot let this happen.

The fixed purpose of the *Concourse* is to provide a forum where we can cooperate with one another in attaining truth; while the inexorable, post-Eden human tendency is to contend with one another in pursuing triumph. Even (perhaps especially) where the topics are important and worth fighting for, it hard to keep civilized discussions from degenerating into unfruitful, bitter verbal combats. And when this happens, our community is no longer steadfastly converging on the whole Truth, but dispersing into warring factions, each hoarding fragments of it.

I mean do what I can in my capacity as editor to resist this destructive tendency. I ask the same of you who read and respond to the articles printed here. The goal is not first of all to win arguments or to display profundity and cleverness, but to help each other better realize “whatever is true.”

Still, there are more dangers than one to be avoided in a situation like ours. While we may risk fomenting strife when we publicly highlight our differences; to fail to address them at all is to cultivate apathy, superficiality and unseriousness toward truth—particularly deplorable weaknesses in a university community. In our eagerness to avoid contention, we are sometimes tempted to let sleeping dogs slip into a coma. Then our efforts to “keep the peace” become instead a way of “enabling” each other to lose sight of truth and our duty to “become perfect” as a university.

It was mainly to respond to this threat to our well-being that the *Concourse* was brought into being.

Therefore, it should not surprise or disturb us too much to find that tensions occasionally arise around our disputes, that our “tone” is not always perfectly congenial to all parties in a given debate, and that from time to time someone feels a bit threatened by the aggressiveness of a critique of his viewpoint. Better, we think, to allow this than to stifle authentic intellectual exchange, which is essential to our maturing as individuals and as a community. It is part of learning to take each other’s ideas and sensibilities more seriously—which is what the *Concourse* is all about.

Kathleen van Schaijik

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Polygamy, the Natural Law and St. Thomas

by Michael Waldstein

IN HER LEAD ARTICLE LAST ISSUE KATHLEEN VAN SCHAIJK CITES OTHERS AS CITING “ADULT STUDENTS” AT A THEOLOGICAL

INSTITUTE AS CITING ST. THOMAS as writing that polygamy is permissible according to the natural law, because one man can inseminate many women. “What then? Is the moral law to be derived from biological facts? Are we beasts?” It comes as no surprise that she claims a fuller and deeper understanding of marriage and particularly of woman “as man’s companion, equal in dignity and therefore worthy of his entire self” has developed in the Church since St. Thomas. It is good to note the care with which she limits her critique to the position of the “adult students,” excepting St. Thomas himself from direct blame: “I do not know St. Thomas well enough to know what he really says on this subject.” And indeed the most important issue is not what St. Thomas really says, but what marriage truly is. I entirely agree with the article on that score. Still, the discussion carried on in past issues of the *Concourse* about St. Thomas as a teacher recommended by the Church impels me to set the record straight as to what St. Thomas says about marriage, and to add some reflections about the development of doctrine and the place St. Thomas ought to have in a Catholic university.

St. Thomas nowhere says that polygamy is permissible according to the natural law. The only text which has been or can be cited (*Summa Theologiae, Supplementum*, q. 65, a. 1) says nothing of the sort, and is not by St. Thomas besides. What the author of

the *Supplementum* does say is, “plurality of wives is in one way against the natural law, in another not.” With respect to characteristics man shares with other animals, his argument runs, polygamy is not contrary to the natural law, while with respect to the nature proper to man as an animal endowed with reason it is. This text stands in tension with the only text in which St. Thomas himself discusses the issue extensively, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.124.

The third of the seven arguments for monogamy offered in the text of St. Thomas is based on characteristics which human beings share with other animals. It is an interesting case study for “moral law derived from biological facts.” In the species of animals in which the father has no concern for raising his offspring, St. Thomas notes, both males and females tend to have promiscuous relations. “This is so among dogs, chickens and the like.” By contrast, in the species in which the father *does* have concern for his offspring, relations tend to be monogamous. St. Thomas finds this tendency reasonable since one male would not be able to offer enough assistance to bring up the offspring of several females. He then applies the point to the

rational animal: “Since, of all animals, the male in the human species has the greatest concern for offspring, it is obviously natural for man that one male should have only one wife, and conversely.” If the male among some beasts

shows a strong attachment to one female and her offspring, one would suspect that a strong desire of similar sort arises in human fathers, similar to and connected with sexual desire.

In the fourth and the fifth arguments, St. Thomas turns to a characteristic that distinguishes human beings from beasts. The characteristic he chooses to focus on in both arguments is the friendship between husband and wife in marriage. The fourth argu-

ment turns on equality as a necessary aspect of such friendship. If women could not have many husbands (which is taken as established by arguments one and two), but men could have many wives, women could not be truly friends of their husbands. They would be reduced to a servile role. St. Thomas adds, “And this argument is corroborated by experience, for among husbands having plural wives the wives have a status like that of servants.”

The fifth argument turns on the

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intensity and completeness of the friendship between husband and wife. It is impossible for one man to have such a friendship with several women. Again St. Thomas emphasizes the consequence of servility when friendship is incomplete on the man's part. "Therefore, if a wife has but one husband, but the husband has several wives, the friendship will not be equal on both sides. So, the friendship will not be free, but servile in some way." The argument seems akin to Katie van Schaijik's reference to woman "as man's companion, equal in dignity and therefore worthy of his entire self."

Both of St. Thomas's arguments "from friendship" should be read in the context of his extensive discussion of charity as the friendship made possible by the grace of Christ (see *Summa Theologiae* II-IIae q. 23-46; *Quaes. Disp. de Caritate*). If one reflects about the two arguments in this context and brings them to the current debate about the equality of man and woman, one cannot but be struck by the "personalist" corrective they can offer to the rights language in which this debate is often cast. What is violated by polygamy is not only the right of woman to equal dignity, but her and her husband's share in the highest virtue, the virtue by which

we are most united with God, charity (see *Summa Theologiae* II-IIae, q. 23, a. 6). One can learn much from St. Thomas on this score, even if one agrees with Katie van Schaijik that "we (as a people) have not understood [the mysteries of human sexuality and of the dignity of women] fully until recently."

These points urge caution in speaking of "development" in theology as a linear progression to greater insight. That there has been development no one will deny. But of what sort that development is can only be seen if one knows both the point of arrival and the point of departure, in this case St. Thomas. Kathleen van Schaijik has admitted her ignorance of St. Thomas's thought on this question. The point can be thrown into relief by the commonplace that our present generation "stands on the shoulders of giants." To speak for myself, I am far from standing on St. Thomas's

shoulders. I am more like a boy sitting on his mother's lap as she traces the letters in the primer.

This, I take it, is what the Church is urging us to do: to turn to St. Thomas as a teacher. I find it extremely unfortunate that the debate carried on last semester in the Concourse about the role of St. Thomas as a teacher has been dominated by the question whether or to what extent one is free to disagree with him. The attempt to twist people's arm into holding that polygamy is in agreement with the natural law by appeal to the authority of St. Thomas is a case in point. This sort of controversy derails the true debate. The true debate, it seems to me, concerns

the practical measures a Catholic institution like Franciscan University ought to take in order to follow the Church's recommendation of St. Thomas as the "doctor communis," the teacher of all. Clearly, if he is to be a teacher, the first question is not "Must I agree with him?" but "How can I learn from him?" This is an eminently practical question. I suggest that those who know the program of studies at the University (I do not know it well) ask whether that program enables students to come to know St. Thomas. Do the students read substantial portions of his works? Are they given substantial and sustained help to understand him? How many class sessions are used for this purpose? I submit that shifting the discussion toward such questions will bring more peace and yield more fruit. ■

Dr. Waldstein is President of the International Theological Institute for Marriage and Family in Gaming Austria.

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CONTINUING CONVERSATIONS



Polygamy and name calling

I find it difficult to believe that one would attempt to justify polygyny (the kind of polygamy in which one husband has several wives) by appealing to the natural law. Revelation teaches us that at the creation of man, long before Our Lord raised natural marriage to the dignity of a sacrament, God willed that the marriage bond exist between one husband and one wife. Moreover, the Church, which “call[s] men back to the observance of the norms of the natural law, as interpreted by her constant doctrine” (Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae* #11), does not teach that polygyny is forbidden solely by positive moral law; rather, she teaches that both forms of polygamy, like divorce, are contrary to the nature of marital love. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that polygamy “directly negates the plan of God which was revealed from the beginning” (#2387, emphasis mine). Like divorce, it was an evil tolerated in the Old Testament as a concession to man’s hardness of heart (#1610).

As sympathetic as I am with the content of Mrs. van Schaijik’s article, I am disturbed by her characterization of her opponents, whom she judges guilty of chauvinism. Such a term reminds me of political discourse at my alma mater. There, if you opposed abortion, your views were deemed sexist; if you opposed racial quotas, you were called a racist; if you defended the prudence of the Holy See’s diplomatic policies of the

time towards Israel, or defended the civil law’s preference for heterosexual marriage, your views were accordingly branded anti-Semitic or homophobic. Now chauvinism *does* exist, just as sexism, racism, anti-Semitism, and homophobia do; but is a man who believes polygyny in conformity with the natural law, or a woman who holds the same about polyandry, *necessarily* a chauvinist? I think not.

If a few Asian-American acquaintances serenely claimed that Asians, as a race, were intellectually superior to Caucasians, said that St. Thomas backed them up, and attempted to prove their case using SAT scores, I wouldn’t accuse them of racism. Instead, I would invite them up to my apartment for cigars, ask them to state their case in the strongest possible terms, take the trouble to inquire *where* St. Thomas makes that claim, and try to understand the truth in their position. If, afterwards, I was moved to write an article criticizing their views, I would not entitle it “the horror of racism and the persistence of bigoted theories in Catholic academia.” Can’t we disagree with our opponents without using loaded words that have ruined careers at other institutions? And wouldn’t such courteous restraint in diction be more in accord with the best traditions of *the University Concourse*?

Jeffrey Ziegler
Development Office

Kathleen van Schaijik replies:

My thanks to Jeffrey Ziegler for the references, and for the subtle verbal clarification: checking Webster’s, I find that polygyny is indeed the proper word for the situation of several wives to one husband, while polygamy refers to one of either sex having several mates. More importantly, I thank him for holding my feet to the fire as regards the *Concourse*’s commitment to courtesy in discourse. I wrote my article in a moment of indignation. Perhaps the discussion would have been better served had I waited until I was calmer—but then, though its tone might have improved, some of its

immediacy would have been lost.

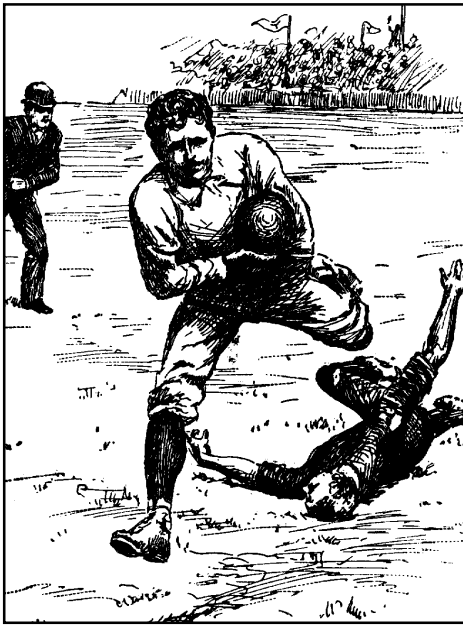
In any case, grateful as I am for his concern, I must take issue with the substance of his complaint against me. The comparison with the irrational, fear-mongering PC crowd at his alma mater is unjust. It does not allow for the distinction between name-calling and calling things by their proper names. While it is of course absurd and worse-than-unhelpful to brand everyone who opposes Israel’s foreign policy an anti-Semite, it would be something else entirely to charge someone who thinks all Jews should be eradicated because they are secretly conspiring to destroy Christendom with anti-Semitism.

The title of my article was chosen for its accuracy, not for its shock value. The theory *is* chauvinistic. And to call a spade a spade is often the first step in dispelling an illusion or defeating an error.

Neither did I judge these students guilty of the moral evil of chauvinism. I was careful to say instead that the *theory* they defended was chauvinistic, because it holds, in essence, that men have a natural right to dominate women. And, although intellectual errors and moral failures are usually linked, I do not for a moment suppose that every person who utters a chauvinistic idea can be fairly considered a full-blown chauvinist. On the contrary, it is in part because I expected that the *deeper* intentions of these Catholic men is to do justice to women that I was so quick to point out the chauvinism of their thinking. My hope was that once the horror of it is made apparent to them, they would gladly repudiate it.

A plea from a Frisbee lover

My love of Ultimate Frisbee and my thorough enjoyment of the many seasons of intramural sports I played at Franciscan University compel me to reply to Joanna Bratten’s article “Sports before studies” in the September 18 is-



sue of the *Concourse*. My impression on reading it was that she has not enjoyed or perhaps even played any intramural sports. I share her disdain for the way much of the world idolizes sports and sports-heroes. And I concede that when intramural sports become more important than classes there is indeed a problem. Still, it was difficult to see my beloved Frisbee treated as a virtual evil and a danger to academics. In spite of her last paragraph's concession that athletics do have a "legitimate place in a university setting," her overall tone implies that only those most base and backward would actually take Frisbee seriously.

Personally, I would sacrifice a lot to play Ultimate Frisbee. And I suppose I was all too willing to make sacrifices during my years at Franciscan to play intramural sports. But, for me, staying up a couple extra hours to study or not going out on the weekends was well worth it. I did not feel then, nor do I feel now, that I was in danger of bowing before the golden sports-cow or of sacrificing my studies in order to play.

Ms. Bratten fails to recognize or at least treat in her article any of the possible goods that may be attached to playing Frisbee or other types of athletic competition. Besides the physical exercise and training involved, the competition itself teaches invaluable lessons: learning to be a part of a team, striving

to play hard and to treat one's opponent with respect. And it was so often just plain fun—playing with friends and against friends. What a great form of much-needed recreation!

Of course, Ultimate Frisbee is not at the level of academics nor should it ever be; but it seems unfair to treat it as if it is an evil, and as if those students who enjoy and are committed to intramural sports should be accused of immaturity, lack of proper priorities or of dragging down the intellectual environment of Franciscan University.

Maria Ellis
Class of '89

Maria Ellis is living with the van Schaijik family in Gaming, Austria, where she puts her love of athletics to excellent use on long hikes and bike rides in the Alpine foothills. She is also studying German.

Sports at Franciscan University

In reading her article "Sports before studies," I perceive that Ms. Bratten has unfortunately misdiagnosed the role of sports at Franciscan University, at least in part because of a bad experience with a few immature students. Although Ms. Bratten's concern with the abuse of athletics is valid as it pertains to other schools, it does not apply to our University. Her claim that sports is the latest, "most insidious" threat to our academics is simply ludicrous.

Perhaps I can offer some more plausible insight as to the role of sports here at the University. Everyone who has ever lived has been created with a tripartite composition of mind, body and soul. We are given by God the free will to use the mind and the body in ways that are beneficial to the soul. God also confers on each person different gifts and talents, which enhance the abilities of any one of the three parts of the human being, if not all of them. One such gift is intelligence, which we at the

University share—it was needed to gain admission to this institution. But God has also graced many students with athletic talent. For those included in this category, it is natural to desire something more than a basic workout, which would stimulate only the body. These people would rather apply their gifts of intelligence and athleticism in unison, partaking in competitions of strategy and skill which involve taking the body to its physical limits—a concise definition of the word "sport." Is it just, then, to attack sports and athletes for sacrificing the use of the mind?

In the Book of Genesis it states that God rested on the Seventh Day. In following this example given to us by God, we must admit the necessity of rest. This need for rest is especially evident here at the University, because concentration on scholarly pursuits all day, every day is humanly impossible! But how do we rest? This question is left to be answered by the individual and his tastes. We all have our own preferences and forms of rest, some of which are simply destructive. Our University, being, as Ms. Bratten says, a "bastion of truth and a proponent of intellectual integrity" encourages us to find wholesome forms of rest which, rather than promoting physical, mental or spiritual sloth, carry the student away from the tension and rigors of the intellectual life, in order that he may re-enter it energized and motivated. Is it just, then, to attack sports as "insidious" and "least important" of all possible university activities?

Ms. Bratten's statements concerning the conflicts occurring between the Honor's Symposium and Ultimate Frisbee games are understandable. There is a certain amount of frustration felt when people shirk their responsibility for one thing to do something of equal or lesser importance. But, since the Honor's Symposium, to my knowledge, is (like sports) an extracurricular activity, and is not required for anyone's graduation—or, for that matter, education—it should take no higher importance than any other extracurricular activity, such as intramural sports. We all must, at some point in our lives, wrestle

with the fact that not everyone values equally those subjective values which we value.

Neither the Athletic Department nor the sport of Ultimate Frisbee are to blame for deficient attendance at Honor's Symposium meetings. Those students who were not mature enough to select one or the other time commitment, so that no one would be left "out on a limb," are the only persons who are at fault. Is it just, then, to attack the general position of sports here at the University?

However, I must agree that there is a virus, a plague of sorts, that runs rampant in the athletic programs at many universities. It is a great injustice that students be allowed to receive scores they did not earn. To attack and stifle such abuses is both valid and obligatory. Ms. Bratten's article would have had a stronger effect at schools such as these, where it would have been more relevant.

Ivan Ortiz
Senior, Humanities and
Catholic Culture

More on the core curriculum debate

In response to Dr. Crosby's critique of my defense of the present core requirements, I begin by noting that I did not "plead" for the existing core. It is obvious that some change is necessary, but the question remains as to the nature and extent of such change. While agreeing that the body of core courses ought to be narrowed and more focused, I argued that it should also contain a degree of flexibility, so as to adequately address students with diverse careers, goals and interests.

Undoubtedly, in making my arguments, I was guilty of a measure of caricature. Such caricature was in part motivated by the hyperbole of those arguing for what I perceived as radical change. Comparisons to "Piedmont Virginia Community College" and

statements about the lack of "real education" were offensive to me and other alumni who were enriched by our academic experience at the University. Caricature and hyperbole do not facilitate reasoned debate, and I regret my participation in such activity.

As I approach the question of curricular reform, I begin with two basic premises. First, any core should contain encounters with the classics. A plausible way to approach these encounters is through carefully constructed survey courses in which students could be confronted with the fundamental questions of which Dr. Crosby wrote, presented in an introductory fashion that would encourage engagement in these questions by the student. In this way, such classes might inspire further exploration by the student. I believe that some of these classes already exist; indeed, I personally enjoyed taking survey-type courses in philosophy and theology while at the University. In my opinion, the University would do well to create a series of such courses to comprise a portion of the core.

My second premise is that different students have different strengths and abilities. This does not seem a remarkable proposition, and in no way implies a denigration of professional students. (Remember that I myself was a professional student.) I noted these differences among students, and Dr. Crosby compared me to those who engage in the condescending treatment of minority students. Such comparison is seriously misplaced and, I may say, a caricature of my argument. Those who patronize minority students are judging their abilities by the color of their skin. I engaged in no comparable judgment. I only noted that different students bring with them different strengths and different interests and that a single inflexible core of courses cannot adequately address such

diverse students.

While Dr. Crosby disavows a great books approach, his colleague Dr. Regis Martin wrote strongly about "sustained encounters with the masters." Other articles contained lists of these masters. The impression I received (and it may have been a false one) was that many professors were advocating a core dominated by extensive readings of the works of these masters. Such an approach would require non-philosophy, theology and literature majors to grapple with very difficult works from these disciplines. A useful comparison might be a requirement that philosophy, theology and literature majors all grapple with calculus and lab-physics. Indeed, a classical liberal arts education surely contains a difficult regimen of math and science. Yet, I hear no clarion call for physics and calculus—disciplines that develop logic, precision and academic rigor. Instead, our students, if they so choose, may take a survey of physical science and lower level math courses. And this is how it should be.

Similarly, surveys in philosophy and theology should be available for those not pursuing those disciplines. Students can be introduced to the masters in small, manageable doses and, if the teacher does his job, the student will pursue further study on his own. Once again, I do not mean to condescend when I reference "small, manageable doses." This is how I was introduced to philosophy, and I believe the approach to be effective. However, such



survey courses are not the only way to provide a liberal arts education. As I attempted to outline in my prior article, writing courses, political science courses and courses in theological doctrine can be used to expose the student to fundamental ideas great, seminal thinkers throughout history. To repeat an example I used earlier, Mary Ann Sunyoger taught a highly useful and practical course in writing by having us read and analyze excerpts from Plato and Augustine and St. Paul. I still argue that such methodology (along with the survey courses described above) will be more accessible and effective for many students than a core of lengthy, difficult works.

Finally, Dr. Crosby used a statement from my article as an opportunity to dispute with those who believe that a professional program combined with catechism is the best form of Catholic higher education. I can assure Dr. Crosby that I do not hold this view, and that the University faculty, especially its theology department, did a fine job instilling in me a beginning knowledge of “how to interpret (documents of faith) with balance and a sense of proportion.” And this is most certainly a sign of an authentic liberal arts education.

Surely, our curriculum can be made stronger and more focused. I applaud those who have undertaken this enterprise and only caution against our es-

tablishing a curriculum that ignores the diversity of vocations within the student body. But to recognize a need for change, one need not disparage what has gone before. We graduates have been immensely blessed—both spiritually and intellectually—by our University experience and by those faculty who provided such experience. It seems to me that fruitful change may only happen if those seeking it begin by acknowledging this reality.

Mark Fischer
Class of '89

Mark Fischer is a contributing editor of the Concourse.

Motherhood

Continued from page 1

which we can never return.

Secondly, nobody, not even Dr. Dobson, can raise my children better than I can. No care-provider could love them as deeply as I do. My children have one mother, and I will not give them a substitute. They need me more than any corporation ever will.

There is also a widespread myth that a woman needs a career in order to be challenged and self-fulfilled. This does not mesh at all with my experience. My most challenging, demanding and stressful employment is the one I have now. I work harder now than I did at the newspaper. The newspaper allowed me a full night's sleep. It did not require continuous changing, bathing, feeding, chasing. My work day began at 8:00 a.m. and ended at 6:00 p.m., with weekends and holidays off. It gave me a gas allowance, monetary incentives, free dinners, tickets to concerts, three

weeks paid vacation and a retirement plan. It is far easier for me to plan an advertising campaign with catchy copy and interesting illustrations within a reasonably priced budget than to explain why dogs bark or what flavor water has. My work at the paper was nowhere near as challenging as what I do now, nor did it give me a fraction of the “fulfillment” I experience in watching my children learn and grow.

So, my aunt's question might seem to pose a dilemma: do I encourage my daughter to go to college only on the condition that she agree not to waste our hard-earned money by putting aside her training and staying at home with her kids?

If one truly understands the value of education, there is no dilemma at all.

At my life's end, my proudest moment will not be that huge account I landed in 1994 to meet that year's budget. It will be those lasting achievements that, by the grace of God, I see in my children's lives.

The decision to work or stay at

There is also a widespread myth that a woman needs a career in order to be challenged and self-fulfilled.

home is a personal one, often dictated by financial need. I do not advocate a certain choice for every woman, nor do I say that college educated women always make better mothers. I do recommend higher education for all who seek it, with the freedom to make of it what they may. ■

Susan (De Ford) Fischer is an '89 graduate of Franciscan University with two lasting achievements. She is married to Contributing Editor Mark Fischer.

