

LIM EXPRESS

LOYOLA INSTITUTE FOR MINISTRY

Loyola Institute for Ministry • Holiday 2011

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Message from the Director

Thomas Ryan, Ph.D.

I prefaced comments so often by saying “As Aquinas would say....” that colleagues at my former institution would roll their eyes and smile knowingly—there he goes again. LIMexpress readership, however, has been spared my Thomistic reflections up until now. So, what I have to say here about a practice of his I call “appreciative critique” and its implications for the Church and for Christmas should still be fresh.

First some background. The formatting of Thomas’s great work of theology, his *Summa theologiae*, is complex. It begins with God, moves to creation and humanity before concluding with the way back to God by way of the God-human Jesus Christ and the sacraments.

Thus, the *Summa* maps a cosmic journey of creation going forth from and returning back to God. It depicts us as on a quest or pilgrimage to our destiny of life with God. In the sacraments and the virtuous life, we get foretastes of that destiny.

The content of the *Summa* is organized fittingly enough into 512 quest-ions, each of which contains numerous articles that are themselves questions about various matters of faith and practice. Thus, what drives the *Summa* forward is, in the first place, openness not closure, wonder not certainty. The answers will come, but it is the questions that invite them.

We wait in hope and joy for the coming of our Savior. We remember he comes to us as a babe and gives light to our darkness. May we be light for others this Christmas.



Best Wishes for a Blessed Christmas and New Year!

The LIM faculty and staff

The articles that comprise the questions consist of several parts, including objections and replies. Each article begins with objections, which are positions that generally run counter to Thomas's own and that provide him with an opportunity to refine his thinking.

How he responds to the dissent conveyed in objections is striking. Rarely does he reject it out of hand and declare it utterly unacceptable. Instead, he often responds perspectively. From one perspective, it makes a certain amount of sense. But seen from another, wider or different perspective, it is problematic. In sum, Thomas often responds appreciatively by drawing out the goodness of even mistaken positions before pointing out their shortfalls.

St. Thomas's approach isn't novel; he's simply following the example set by the Incarnation whose feast we celebrate on December 25. There would be time enough for critique, but God's initial impulse for deigning to associate with humanity, for entering into human society with all its ambiguity was appreciative, "God so loved the world..." (Jn. 3:16).

As we celebrate the beginning of the new liturgical year, I have a prayer and a question. I wonder what difference these examples could make for us. What difference would it make to discourse in the Church or political sphere if our first impulse were not to press the advantage but to appreciate the truth, the goodness, and/or beauty of those we so quickly disagree with?

My prayer is for renewed vision in this season of hopeful watchfulness, that we may recognize God's presence in unexpected places and situations. As they say in south Louisiana, Joyeaux Noël!!



Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Ryan" followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Thomas Ryan, Ph.D.

Director, Loyola Institute for Ministry

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Webinars

Join us for our online webinars. You can read about our upcoming events at <http://www.lim.loyno.edu/online-events>. We also have begun to archive our webinars. So, if you miss one, you can view it at your leisure.

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The Genius of Ignatian Spirituality for the Twenty-First Century

Loyola New Orleans along with four other Jesuit universities will sponsor "The Genius of Ignatian Spirituality for the 21st Century" from 2:30-5:00 p.m. CDT on three Fridays: March 16, 23, and 30. We encourage groups and individuals to participate. We have a limited number of "seats" available and small charge will apply. For more information, please see <http://lim.loyno.edu/ignatiangenius>. If you're interested, please alert Tom Ryan, tfryan@loyno.edu.

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Summer Institute for Catholic School Leadership (SICSL)

The Catholic identity of Catholic schools was less a concern when school leaders were ordained or religious and so products of years of formation. In contrast, school presidents and principals today are more likely to be lay and have impressive education credentials; they are less likely to have formal training in Catholic identity. SICSL this year will help participants recognize what is distinctive about the Catholic worldview; articulate the implications of a school's Catholic identity for students, teachers, faculty, staff, and parents; and develop some practical steps for infusing Catholic identity across schools. The dates this year are June 11-14 and the Summer Institute concludes with lunch at a nice New Orleans restaurant. The cost is \$400, and housing is available. For more information, visit the Summer Institute's web page at <http://www.loyno.edu/lplc/catholic-school-leadership> or contact Eileen Chapoton chapoton@loyno.edu.

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LIM in the News

Click on <http://bit.ly/ndYiJX> for an article about the Loyola extension program at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, LA.

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Research Guides for Paper Writing

Jennifer Shimek, M.F.A.

Every Common Curriculum Course now has an online Research Guide to assist students with locating source materials to use when writing their papers. Each Guide lists and contains live links to appropriate databases, ebooks, and websites. Each Guide also explains how to cite these sources, and full Works Cited entries for ebooks and websites can be viewed by clicking on the icon of a blue circle with an "i" in its center located next to a particular source's name. Research Guides for each Focus Area will be available in the Spring 2012 semester. The Research Guides are listed by course and can be accessed at <http://researchguides.loyno.edu/ministry>. The link for each course is listed in the course bibliography under Suggested Loyola University Library Resources.

Brian Sullivan, Online Learning Librarian at Loyola, developed these pages along with Jennifer Shimek, the LIM Writing Consultant and Materials Specialist, using the course bibliographies created by each course's Instructor of Record. If you have any questions about the resources or how to use them, tutorial links are available on the Research Guide page, as is contact information for Brian.

Discernment Workshops for Facilitators

Daniella Zsupan-Jerome, Ph.D.

The Discernment Workshop for Facilitators is the continuation of the practical formation of LIMEX facilitators from the initial Certification Workshops. The Discernment Workshop helps prepare facilitators for the Discernment Process that each learning group engages in to discern one's continued path of studies with the Loyola Institute for Ministry, especially in terms of choosing focus areas after the common curriculum courses. The Discernment Workshop also creates an intentional space for facilitators to continue to process and share with one another their experiences and wisdom gleaned from serving their learning groups. The Discernment Workshop is also a prayerful experience that invites facilitators to enter into the spiritual process of discernment, so as to be better able to accompany their respective learning groups in their discernment of God's call in their lives.

The Loyola Institute for Ministry has offered the Discernment Workshop for Facilitators in a variety of settings. The upcoming workshops for in 2011-2012 will be in an online format, offered through the Blackboard course management software. For facilitators between Courses Three and Five and any other facilitator past Course Five who has not yet participated in the Discernment Workshop, you will receive an invitation and more information from Daniella Zsupan-Jerome, the Faculty Coordinator of Distance Learning Systems. If you have questions, please contact Daniella at dzsupanj@loyno.edu or 504.865.3251; 800-777-5469 x3251.

A discernment process follows either after Course Five: *Church, Sacraments and Ministry* or after Course Six: *Spirituality, Morality, and Ethics*. During this discernment process students reflect on their own life and ministry as they choose a focus area of study for the remainder of the program. The process is designed so that it may be completed in a retreat format.

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Notes from Cecelia

Cecelia M. Bennett, J.C.L.

2012 Commencement

The 2012 spring commencement activities will be held the weekend of May 12, 2012. The LIM liturgy and reception is on Saturday afternoon, May 12, at 4:30 p.m. All certificate and degree candidates are invited to participate with their guests. University Commencement for degree candidates for May, August, and December 2012 is on Saturday, May 12th at 9:45 a.m. in the Mercedes Benz Louisiana Superdome. Facilitators of groups graduating in 2012 are sent by email information from Diane Blair <dblair@loyno.edu> on the liturgy and reception and the other University commencement activities. Facilitators are asked to forward email copies of the email to members of their groups.

All 2012 degree and certificate graduates (students who have successfully completed 27 hours or 9 courses) need to apply online at: <<https://secure.loyno.edu/records/applicationfordegree/>>. The university's reply to your online application will be sent to your loyno.edu email address. You may find your Loyola email address on LORA if you do not remember it. Directions on how to do this are in the *Policy Manual* and on LORA. We have posted on the LIM Documents Web page in the Student Section under "Commencement" general information on commencement and information on the LIM Liturgy. Information is now posted by the university at: <<http://www.loyno.edu/commencement/>>.

Christmas Break

The university offices are closed for the Christmas holiday from Thursday, 22 December through Sunday, 1 January. The last date to submit a paper to the Writing Consultant Service in order to receive it back before Christmas is by 14 December. If you are planning on beginning classes the first two weeks in January, please email your rosters to limexreg@loyno.edu by 16 December so that the DVD order can be processed in time for the videos to arrive in time for class. Course One and Two rosters should be emailed in by 12 December in order to allow time for clearing the rosters for admissions. Graded papers that are mailed to Loyola during the holiday breaks will not be processed until Monday, 2 January. Adjunct faculty also most likely will not be evaluating papers over the break. On-campus classes and exams are over on 16 December and classes resume on 9 January. We encourage learning groups to also take time off from class over the holidays. It is a good opportunity for renewal and relaxation so you can start fresh in the New Year.

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Extension Requests

We have had an increase in extension requests over the last few years and many students are not able to work on a pass due paper and a current course and end up getting even further behind. Our goal is to assist students in succeeding in the program. We are taking several measures to help students individually and as a group stay on track. At session four of each common curriculum learning group course and at the registration session for the next course, the facilitator will check in with students on how they are doing with paper preparation and to see if there are things the group as a whole can do to better stay on track. This is a good time for the group to evaluate the pace at which it is moving.

We encourage groups to take the full 15 weeks to do a course. This will give most groups 3 to 4 weeks to do the written assignments, after the last class learning group session. We also encourage groups to begin classes for the Fall semester mid August or early September; for the Spring Semester in January, and late May early June for the Summer semester. This would give students a better break between classes and would enable those students with incompletes to work on them between semesters, in the same way our on campus students who have an incompletes would do.

Additionally, we have moved to not requiring more than two final papers in the common curriculum learning group courses. The syllabus and learning designs will have reminders for students to begin remote preparation on the papers. If concerns about the content of the assignment are a cause for not beginning to write, students are always welcome to email the IOR for the course with their questions or send an email to set up a phone appointment. Adjunct faculty during the assignment phone call are open to taking questions about the assignment and will indicate if they are available to be contacted by email after the call as a student is working on the assignment with questions about the assignment.

Extension request letters have been modified to highlight the implications of asking for an incomplete in a course. Students are asked to include in the request "What I have done and/or the steps I have in place to complete the written course assignment while doing the next course."

We also remind students in the notification letter that:

- I may jeopardize my academic standing if I am unable to meet the extension date;

- If I have an incomplete or withdrawal passing in other courses that have not yet been completed, my registration in further courses will be blocked until all the previously unwritten assignments are completed;
- If my course assignments are not mailed to the adjunct faculty member by the two-month extension due date, the grade of I will be automatically changed to WP, (Withdraw Passing)
- I should contact the Instructor of Record if I have concerns about this course assignment and my academic advisor if I am having problems with my Loyola course work overall. I may contact the Writing Consultant Service if I need assistance preparing the final copy of my paper(s).

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