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Challenges of Catholic Legal Education

INFUSING CATHOLICISM IN TEACHING AND WRITING

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Abstract

Catholic law faculty instruct not only the minds of students but also reach their souls. Even during times of crisis, such as the 2020 pandemic, Catholic educators courageously developed solutions to protect the health of students while also nurturing their minds and hearts. This article examines the importance that the Church places on education and research through the guidance offered to Catholic educators by the Gifts of the Holy Spirit received in the Sacrament of Confirmation. By infusing Catholicism in teaching and writing, law faculty share the teachings of Christ with both students and scholars.

Keywords: catholic legal education, faith-based pedagogy, gifts of the Holy Spirit, integrating faith and scholarship, Catholic social teaching

After decades of declining congregations,¹ horrific reports of child abuse,² evidence that bishops failed to remove predators from positions of trust,³ and attempts to

¹ Kate SELIG: With a New U.S. Pope, Here's How the Face of Catholicism in America Has Changed. *New York Times* (Accessed on 9 May 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/20/us/us-catholic-identity.html> ("For decades, the share of American Catholics declined in the face of broader trends in secularization. But those numbers have stabilized in recent years, according to the latest survey data from the Pew Research Center, buoyed by growing immigrant communities across the West and the South and by broader societal changes that are transforming Catholic identity.").

² Sexual Abuse Civil Lawsuits That Have Gone to Trial. *Bishop Accountability*, (Accessed on 6 December 2010), https://www.bishop-accountability.org/legal/civil_trials.htm#Kos ("Thousands of civil suits have been filed in the United States relating to alleged sexual abuse by Catholic priests, but very few have gone to trial. BishopAccountability.org has reviewed the evidence and documented 43 civil suits that have been tried since the mid-1980s.").

³ Ed HOUSEWRIGHT – Brooks EGERTON: Plaintiffs awarded \$119.6 million in Kos case. *Dallas Morning News*, (25 July 1997, 2:41 PM), <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/1997/07/25/plaintiffs-awarded-119->

marginalize Catholics,⁴ a subtle, slow change in American perceptions of the Catholic Church began around 2020. That year, the international COVID-19 Pandemic brought the world to a halt. In the United States, all schools across all grades were shut down in March of 2020.⁵ Shortly thereafter, the debate began about when schools could safely re-open. While the government run public school system, dominated by powerful teachers' unions, lobbied for schools to remain closed,⁶ Catholic school educators acted courageously.

From the elementary schools to the university level, Catholic administrators and teachers demonstrated both leadership and commitment to students. "Setting an industry standard, more than 90% of Catholic schools opened safely, in person, five days a week with hybrid options during the pandemic. This is compared to approximately

6-million-in-kos-case/ (Kos Jury Awards \$ 119 Million Diocese Found Grossly Negligent Sex Abuse Judgment Largest of Its Kind).

⁴ Alexandra DESANCTIS: Dianne Feinstein Attacks Judicial Nominee's Catholic Faith. *National Review*, (6 September 6 2017, 9:40 PM), <https://tinyurl.com/5an38v4u>; See Also *Mitchell v. Helms*, 530 U.S. 793., 828–829. (2000) ("Opposition to aid to "sectarian" schools acquired prominence in the 1870's with Congress' consideration (and near passage) of the Blaine Amendment, which would have amended the Constitution to bar any aid to sectarian institutions. Consideration of the amendment arose at a time of pervasive hostility to the Catholic Church and to Catholics in general, and it was an open secret that "sectarian" was code for "Catholic." See generally Green, The Blaine Amendment Reconsidered, 36 Am. J. Legal Hist. 38 (1992)... In short, nothing in the Establishment Clause requires the exclusion of pervasively sectarian schools from otherwise permissible aid programs, and other doctrines of this Court bar it. This doctrine, born of bigotry, should be buried now.").

⁵ Paul CARON: 100% of Law Schools Have Moved Online Due to the Coronavirus. *Taxprof Blog* (18 March 2020), <https://tinyurl.com/jrdzpjcm> ("All 199 ABA-accredited law schools in the United States have moved entirely online due to the coronavirus.") [<https://perma.cc/22AW-5GMC>]. Colleges and universities are sending students home to watch lectures online. Public schools closing. Offices asking people to telecommute. Concerts, parades, festivals and sporting events postponed. Is all of this really necessary for the coronavirus? Are public health officials overreacting to the threat posed by the virus that causes the disease COVID19? It's absolutely necessary, because it's worked in the past, says medical historian Howard Markel, M.D., Ph.D., a University of Michigan expert who has studied the effects of similar responses to past epidemics. "An outbreak anywhere can go everywhere," ... And right now, "We all need to pitch in to try to prevent cases both within ourselves and in our communities." It's called "flattening the curve," a term that public health officials use all the time but that many Americans just heard for the first time this week. Kara GAVIN: Flattening the Curve for COVID-19: What Does it Mean and How Can You Help? *Mich. Med.: U. Mich.* (11 March 2020, 1:47 PM), <https://tinyurl.com/5b5k599u> [<https://perma.cc/G2L5-2GAX>]; see generally The President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America: 15 Days to Slow the Spread, *Coronavirus.Gov*, <https://www.justice.gov/doj/page/file/1258511/dl> [<https://perma.cc/TQF9-J648>]; see also Austin Williams, CDC's 'Flatten the Curve' Graphic Shows Why Social Distancing Amid Coronavirus Pandemic is Necessary, *Fox29 Phila.*, <https://tinyurl.com/4knj64bh> (13 March 2020, 8:50 PM), [<https://perma.cc/E66H-AP93>].

⁶ Jon LEVINE: Powerful teachers union influenced CDC on school reopenings, emails show. *New York Post*, (Accessed on 1 May 2021, 7:08 PM), <https://tinyurl.com/mvx8tvkf> ("The American Federation of Teachers lobbied the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on, and even suggested language for, the federal agency's school-reopening guidance released in February. The powerful teachers union's full-court press preceded the federal agency putting the brakes on a full re-opening of in-person classrooms, emails between top CDC, AFT and White House officials show").

56% of public schools.”⁷ Father John Jenkins, the president of the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, boldly explained the Catholic viewpoint in an op-ed in the *New York Times* in May of 2020, stating:

The pivotal question for us individually and as a society is not whether we should take risks, but what risks are acceptable and why. Disagreements among us on that question are deep and vigorous, but I’d hope for wide agreement that the education of young people — the future leaders of our society — is worth risking a good deal. Indeed, the mark of a healthy society is its willingness to bear burdens and take risks for the education and well-being of its young.⁸

Catholic educators emerged as role models from the pandemic, demonstrating courage⁹ and a true commitment to the education of youth.

The popularity of Catholicism in the United States continues to increase,¹⁰ with Vice President J.D. Vance a high-profile convert.¹¹ Younger Americans are converting to Catholicism at record rates,¹² perhaps somewhat encouraged by the fact that an American now sits on St. Peter’s throne.¹³ All of these factors contribute to an increased

⁷ The Nation’s Report Card Shows Catholic Schools Excelling Post-Pandemic, The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a biennial report of the U.S. Department of Education, notes Catholic schools outperforming public school counterparts in almost all categories. *National Catholic Education Association*, (Accessed on 4 August 2025), <https://tinyurl.com/y5m56u88>

⁸ John I. JENKINS: We’re Reopening Notre Dame. It’s worth the Risk: Informed by the best medical advice we can find, we believe we can keep our campus environment healthy. *New York Times*, (26 May 2020), <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/26/opinion/notre-dame-university-coronavirus.html>.

⁹ Ibid. (“Perhaps what we most need now, alongside science, is that kind of courage and the practical wisdom it requires. Notre Dame’s recent announcement about reopening is the attempt to find the courageous mean as we face the threat of the virus and seek to continue our mission of education and inquiry”).

¹⁰ Emily STURGE: Gen Z flocks to Catholicism in search of ‘truth’ and ‘order’ as young people reject leftism. *Campus Reform*, (28 April 2025, 11:25 AM), <https://tinyurl.com/ywx32ssw> (“A Harvard University survey revealed a significant increase in the percentage of Generation Z identifying as Catholic, with numbers climbing 15 to 21 percent from 2022 to 2023”).

¹¹ J. D. VANCE: How I Joined Resistance: On Mamaw and becoming Catholic. *The Lamp*, (1 April 2020), <https://rb.gy/hclm2u> (“I came eventually to believe that the teachings of the Catholic Church were true, but it happened slowly and unevenly”).

¹² Rikki SCHLOTT: Young people are converting to Catholicism en masse — driven by pandemic, internet, ‘lax’ alternatives. *New York Post*, (17 April 2025, 11:00 AM), <https://tinyurl.com/2x3r89zd>.

¹³ What it Means for the First American To Be Chosen as Pope. *Georgetown University*, (9 May 2025), <https://www.georgetown.edu/news/what-it-means-for-the-first-american-to-be-chosen-as-pope/> (“Cardinal Robert Francis Prevost, a 69-year-old Chicago native, has been chosen as the successor to Pope Francis. Pope Leo XIV, his chosen papal name, will be the first American to lead the Catholic Church in its nearly 2,000-year-old history.”)

Pope Leo XIV attended Villanova University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and spent more than a decade serving as a missionary, leader of the Augustinian Order and bishop in Peru. For the past two years, he led the Vatican office that selects the next bishops globally”; Danielle GENOVESE: Pope Leo XIV could boost Catholic church attendance in US, Augustinian says: Pope Leo’s roots could create a personal connection with American Catholics amid lower church attendance. *Fox Business*, (18 May 2025, 8:00 AM), <https://tinyurl.com/vr6tn2m7> (Pope Leo XIV “being an American, first off, is historic. Then, being from Chicago specifically, I think it appeals to a lot of the people in the Midwest [and] in the

interest in and growing respect for the Catholic Church in the United States, reversing the decades-long trend of insults against and disparagement of the Church. Additionally, worldwide interest in Catholicism continues to grow,¹⁴ demonstrated by the one million faithful who attended the Pope Leo's celebration of Mass during the Youth Jubilee in August, 2025 outside of Rome, Italy.¹⁵ Indeed, 2025 may well be remembered as the Year of the Catholic, or at minimum, as a year of good press for Catholicism.

In world history, there has never been a more accessible time to learn about the Catholic Church. The internet provides an especially welcoming format for those interested in Catholicism to find resources.

In an age of instability, people are attracted to ancient traditions; in an age of therapy-speak, there's something appealing about the tough demands of Catholic doctrine... Catholicism also has a visual and aesthetic heritage which has translated well into online culture. Catholics have turned out to be surprisingly good at using the internet to evangelize.¹⁶

The popularity of *Hallow*,¹⁷ *Word on Fire* by Bishop Barron,¹⁸ and the *Bible in a Year* with Father Mike Schmitz¹⁹ demonstrate vast interest in learning more about faith. The Catholic mission thrives, offering individuals access to its teachings across a wide variety of platforms.

As Catholic academics, we are called to bring the teachings of Christ to our students. St. John Paul II said,

middle of the country," Connor said. "What's significant about that for American Catholics is that... we have a pope that really understands us. And it'll excite interest back in the church. I would suspect more people will start coming to Mass").

¹⁴ Luke COPPEN: Are more adults becoming Catholic? Statistics for this year's Rite of Election figures are still coming in – but already the picture seems strikingly positive. *The Pillar* (18 March 2025), <https://www.pillarcatholic.com/p/are-more-adults-becoming-catholic>

¹⁵ Associated Press, Pope Leo tells 1 million Catholic youths they are sign 'different world is possible'. *National Public Radio*, (3 August 2025, 8:36 AM), <https://tinyurl.com/4duekyay>.

¹⁶ Madeleine KEARNS: How Catholicism Got Cool: Young Americans and people around the world are flocking to the Catholic Church. The Free Press spoke to them to find out why. *Free Press*, (4 June 2025), <https://www.thefp.com/p/meet-americas-newest-catholics>.

¹⁷ Hallow Makes History Taking #1 Spot in App Store. *Hallow*, (15 February 2024), <https://hallow.com/blog/hallow-makes-history-taking-no-1-spot-in-app-store/> ("Hallow, the #1 prayer app in the world, made history on Wednesday, becoming the first religious app to reach the #1 spot on Apple's App Store.

Hallow reached the top spot on Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent and the beginning of its Lent Pray40 prayer challenge.

"We're blown away. When we started Hallow, it would've been crazy for us to imagine a thousand people praying together on it, much less 1 million," said Alex Jones, Hallow CEO and co-founder. "God is doing incredible things. All glory and credit and praise belongs to Him."

More than 1 million people joined the 40-day prayer series that features Mark Wahlberg, Jonathan Roumie, Fr. Mike Schmitz, Sr. Miriam James and Sr. Mary Bernice").

¹⁸ Bishop Robert BARON: *Word on Fire*. *Youtube*, (Accessed on 5 August 2025), <https://www.youtube.com/user/wordonfirevideo>.

¹⁹ ASCENSION PRESENTS: *The Bible in a Year* (with Fr. Mike Schmitz). *Youtube*, (Accessed on 5 August 2025), <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcXS0cAkuTPqFMtZQ379qdEmcfxOISvXc>.

The Church needs men and women who are intent on teaching by word and example – intent on helping to permeate the whole educational milieu with the spirit of Christ. This is a great vocation, and the Lord himself will reward all who serve in it as educators in the cause of the word of God.²⁰

Teaching by word and example includes both subject matter choices as well as modeling the teachings of Christ in the treatment of others. Even when religion is not the focus of the lesson or writing, faith guides the topics chosen and the choices made in presentation, enabling the infusion of Catholicism into teaching.

In addition to their teaching responsibilities, faculty focus great efforts on developing their areas of expertise. Scholarly research is “important to any law school in enhancing the learning experience of its students.”²¹ Students and schools benefit from a faculty actively engaged in sharing ideas and analysis.

Faculty scholarship has other direct effects on the quality of the instruction that is offered to students. The faculty member who is a productive scholar in the areas in which he or she is teaching is best able to deal with and convey a sense of the most important contemporary problems in the field. Closely allied to this is the fact that scholarly necessity requires the scholar to be conversant with all of the relevant materials and sources.²²

In 1968, Pope Paul VI discussed the importance of research as well as the duty of the scholar to follow the teachings of Christ.

The Church, most assuredly, has always the duty to carry on the effort to study more deeply and to present, in a manner ever better adapted to successive generations, the unfathomable mysteries of God, rich for all in fruits of salvation. But at the same time the greatest care must be taken, while fulfilling the indispensable duty of research, to do no injury to the teachings of Christian doctrine.²³

Thus, whether or not the research focuses on religious topics, the Catholic scholar should be guided by faith.

One way to frame infusing Catholicism into teaching and research is to consider the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit that practicing Catholics receive through the Sacrament of Confirmation:²⁴ wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.²⁵ In the Spring and Summer of 2014, Pope Francis held public audiences

²⁰ JOHN PAUL II: *Message of John Paul II to the National Catholic Educational Association of the United States. The Vatican*, (16 April 1979), <https://tinyurl.com/yeuuh4p6>.

²¹ Charles H. KOCH, Jr. – Frederick SCHAUER: Legal Scholarship and the Mission of a Law Faculty. *William & Mary Law School Scholarship Repository* 11, Spring (1981), 23.

²² Ibid.

²³ PAUL VI: Apostolic Letter in the Form of Motu Proprio Credo of the People of God of the Supreme Pontiff Paul VI. *The Vatican*, (30 June 1968), <https://tinyurl.com/5e5nmmun>.

²⁴ Confirmation. *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops* (Accessed on 5 August 2025), <https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/confirmation> (“In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized person is “sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit” and is strengthened for service to the Body of Christ”).

²⁵ POPE FRANCIS: General Audience: St. Peter’s Square. *The Vatican*, (9 April 2014), <https://tinyurl.com/4amwvjau>.

during which he featured one gift each week. This essay examines his explanations of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in the context of infusing Catholicism into teaching and research.

For the gift of understanding, Pope Francis stated “It is clear then that the gift of understanding is closely connected to faith. When the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts and enlightens our minds, he makes us grow day by day in the understanding of what the Lord has said and accomplished.”²⁶ There are many daily opportunities to experience the gift of understanding. For example, the gift of understanding is infused into teaching when there is an opportunity to pray together in class.²⁷ Additionally, offering classes in Canon Law,²⁸ Catholic Social Thought,²⁹ or Legal Theology³⁰ enlightens the mind as it examines our faith, such that there is a growth in the gift of understanding.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit can also be subtly shared, allowing the infusion of Catholicism into the lessons themselves. As St. John Paul II explained, “Catholic education is above all a question of communicating Christ, of helping to form Christ in the lives of others.”³¹ Sometimes the secular world intrudes on the classroom, even when teaching at a Catholic institution. Concerns about confronting modern secular

²⁶ POPE FRANCIS: General Audience: St. Peter’s Square. *The Vatican*, (30 April 2014), <https://tinyurl.com/uwtvvy88>.

²⁷ David A. GRENARDO: Improving The Law School Classroom And Experience Through Prayer; An Empirical Study. *Ave Maria Law Review* 13, 1. (2015), 81. (“Prayer certainly has a positive effect on the classroom in fostering a respectful and welcoming environment.2 6 In addition, emphasizing that the professor and students are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect addresses the basic need that individuals have to be treated with respect, which in turn helps to create a safe and positive learning environment. Prayer not only creates an atmosphere in the classroom that is reverent, positive, and cohesive, but it also provides students with some time to reflect and prepare for class itself”).

²⁸ YLPC- Canon Law. *University of St. Thomas Academic Catalog*, (Accessed on 5 August 2025), <https://catalog.stthom.edu/ylpccanon-law>; School of Canon Law Course Descriptions. *The Catholic University of America*, (Accesses on 5 August 2025), <https://canonlaw.catholic.edu/academics/courses/course-descriptions/index.html> (Examples of such courses include YLPC 6201: Introduction to Canon Law and other courses offered at the University of St. Thomas in Texas as well as the school of Canon Law at Catholic University in Washington, D.C.).

²⁹ Rick GARNETT: Catholic Social Thought and Law at Yale. *Prawfsblog*, (26 January 2006, 4:25 PM), https://prawfsblawg.blogs.com/prawfsblawg/2006/01/catholic_social.html (“Eduardo Penalver, my fellow blogger at “Mirror of Justice,” is teaching a course this term at Yale Law School on “Catholic Social Thought and the Law.” (Several law schools, including Notre Dame’s, offer this course, and Villanova’s law school just started a new journal on the topic.”).

³⁰ J.D./M.A. Master of Arts in Catholic Studies. *University of St. Thomas School of Law*, (Accessed on 5 August 2025), <https://law.stthomas.edu/jd-program/coursework-options/ma-catholic-studies/> (“At St. Thomas, students interested in pursuing the law while growing in their Catholic faith have an opportunity to pursue a joint J.D. and master’s degree program offered by the School of Law and the Department of Catholic Studies. Our university’s Catholic Studies program is the oldest, largest program of its kind. And St. Thomas Law is ranked #5 on National Jurist’s list of the Most ‘Devout’ Law Schools (2025)”).

³¹ JOHN PAUL II: Message of John Paul II to the National Catholic Educational Association of the United States. *The Vatican*, (16 April 1979), <https://tinyurl.com/yeuuh4p6>.

beliefs that are antithetical to Catholic³² provoke possible confrontations with upholding Catholic values.

Yet, whatsoever the beliefs, statements or appearance of students, the Catholic response is to treat everyone as Christ would have treated them. Recognizing that each one is a child of God. Treating each student with respect and compassion demonstrates the Holy Spirit's gift of wisdom.

And wisdom is precisely this: it is the grace of being able to see everything with the eyes of God. It is simply this: it is to see the world, to see situations, circumstances, problems, everything through God's eyes. This is wisdom. Sometimes we see things according to our liking or according to the condition of our heart, with love or with hate, with envy.... No, this is not God's perspective. Wisdom is what the Holy Spirit works in us so as to enable us to see things with the eyes of God.³³

Students may reject the teachings of our faith and voice opposition to our beliefs. Law faculty should strive to use the gift of wisdom and consider that even when student comments or appearances are not to our liking or in accordance with our beliefs, Catholic educators never reject the person, just as God would never reject one of us. Such a response may help form Christ in others.

Although the Holy Spirit's Gift of Fear of the Lord sounds more like a warning than a gift, it nevertheless reassures us that God would never reject us, while also empowering us to follow our faith. Pope Francis explained that

Fear of the Lord allows us to be aware that everything comes from grace and that our true strength lies solely in following the Lord Jesus and in allowing the Father to bestow upon us his goodness and his mercy. To open the heart, so that the goodness and mercy of God may come to us. This is what the Holy Spirit does through the gift of fear of the Lord: he opens hearts. The heart opens so that forgiveness, mercy, goodness and the caress of the Father may come to us, for as children we are infinitely loved.³⁴

Fear of the Lord allows the Catholic Educator to become fearless of everything else. We can safely open our hearts to mercy and goodness toward others. We can do what we know is right, even in the face of criticism or unpopularity. We do not fear earthly retribution when following the tenants of Catholicism. Instead, we derive strength from following the Lord and battling injustice wherever it is found.

³² Matthew McDONALD: Catholic Schools Tiptoeing the Line on Gender Identity Bishops and educators are seeking to understand how best to love the student and extend pastoral care to families without affirming the crisis. *National Catholic Register*, (2 November 2022), <https://www.ncregister.com/news/catholic-schools-tiptoeing-the-line-on-gender-identity> ("What happens if a student at a Catholic school declares he is now a she or she is now a he?")

The Church's teaching is clear: "Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity," the Catechism of the Catholic Church states (2333). Pope Francis, in his 2016 apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, said: "Beyond the understandable difficulties which individuals may experience, the young need to accept their own body as it was created ...".

³³ POPE FRANCIS: General Audience: St. Peter's Square. *The Vatican*, (9 April 2014), <https://tinyurl.com/4amwvjau>.

³⁴ POPE FRANCIS: General Audience: St. Peter's Square. *The Vatican*, (11 June 2015), <https://tinyurl.com/2rx5ve96>.

Fear of the Lord empowers us to advocate for the weak and ill, not merely one on one, but also through our research. For example, in the wealthy United States, homeless individuals suffering from mental illness wander our streets, actively experiencing the ravages of their illness on their minds and bodies.³⁵ Research reveals that it is our legal system – not finances – that has closed the psychiatric hospitals and abandoned the mentally ill to the streets. Research brings these legal issues into the light,³⁶ and enables the Catholic scholar to propose compassionate, Christ-centered solutions.³⁷

Fear of the Lord enables Law Faculty to stand up for the stranger and empowers³⁸ us to effect change through research and writing. Even laws with good intentions sometimes have negative impacts. For example, laws designed to protect medical privacy have been contorted by regulations that interfere with continuity of care for the sickest among us.³⁹ Infusing Catholicism into research includes offering solutions to protect those who cannot protect themselves from both physical harm as well as legal difficulties.⁴⁰

Fear of the Lord allows us to protest injustice, and to follow Christ's teaching to help others. The most marginalized among us often wait in immigration detention centers, dwell in our prisons⁴¹ or await their executions on death row.⁴² Law faculty train students in clinical programs, teaching future lawyers to offer exemplary representation to the

³⁵ Ending Crime and Disorder on America's Streets. *The White House*, (26 July 2025), <https://tinyurl.com/mr3sepn7> ("The number of individuals living on the streets in the United States on a single night during the last year of the previous administration — 274,224 — was the highest ever recorded. The overwhelming majority of these individuals are addicted to drugs, have a mental health condition, or both. Nearly two-thirds of homeless individuals report having regularly used hard drugs like methamphetamines, cocaine, or opioids in their lifetimes. An equally large share of homeless individuals reported suffering from mental health conditions").

³⁶ Joanmarie DAVOLI: No Room at the Inn: How the Federal Medicaid Program Created Inequities in Psychiatric Hospital Access for the Indigent Mentally Ill. *American Journal of Law and Medicine* 29, 2–3. (2003), 159–183. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0098858800002793>

³⁷ Joanmarie DAVOLI: Too Little, Too Late? Executive Orders & the Disappearance of Psychiatric Hospitals. *Wayne Law Review*, 69, 2. (2023), 169–242. Judy A. CLAUSEN – Joanmarie DAVOLI: Alternatives to the Squad Care: A Strategy Providing Hope for People with Mental Illness. *University of Florida Levin College of Law* 93, 4. (2024), 719–810.

³⁸ JOHN PAUL II: Message of John Paul II to the National Catholic Educational Association of the United States. *The Vatican*, (16 April 1979), <https://tinyurl.com/yeuuh4p6> (St. John Paul II urged us "Be strong, therefore, in pursuing these goals [trained to live the newness of Christian life in justice and in the holiness of truth]").

³⁹ Joanmarie DAVOLI: HIPAA'S Hypocrites. *Creighton Law Review* 58, 2. (2025), 127–187. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5295192>

⁴⁰ Joanmarie DAVOLI: Diverting the Mentally Ill Out of the Virginia Criminal Justice System. *George Mason University Civil Rights Law Journal* 11, 1. (2000), 109–124.

⁴¹ Joanmarie DAVOLI: You Have the Right to an Attorney; If You Cannot Afford One, Then the Government Will Underpay an Overworked Attorney Who Must Also Be an Expert in Psychiatry and Immigration Law. *Michigan State Law Review* 2012, 4. (2012), 1149–1187. (This author wrote articles protesting the treatment of indigent defendants).

⁴² Joanmarie DAVOLI: Playing Politics with Executions: Abuse of Executive Discretion. *George Mason University Civil Rights Law Journal* 30, 3. (2020), 307–350. Joanmarie DAVOLI: Evolving Standards of Irrelevancy. *Quinnipiac Law Review* 41, 81. (2022), 81–133.

powerless.⁴³ Research proposes solutions that infuse the teachings of Christ into the proposed recommendations.

Fear of the Lord also calls Law Faculty to protect the innocent. Where great injustice occurs, such as in the mistreatment of the powerless by the hands of the powerful,⁴⁴ tenure protects faculty from career repercussions. Even if faced with career retribution, the gift of Fear of the Lord reminds us that with grace, our true strength lies not in career advancement, but with following the teachings of Christ. Fear of the Lord opens our hearts and empowers us to seek justice and mercy.

Law Faculty often experience the Holy Spirit Gift of counsel. In fact, when students express a rejection of religion, teaching gives us the opportunity to respond consistently with Christ's teachings. Pope Francis explained that

Counsel, then, is the gift through which the Holy Spirit enables our conscience to make a concrete choice in communion with God, according to the logic of Jesus and his Gospel. In this way, the Spirit makes us grow interiorly, he makes us grow positively, he makes us grow in the community and he helps us not to fall prey to self-centredness and one's own way of seeing things.⁴⁵

The very expression of disagreement with the lessons of the Church prompt faculty to remember how Jesus dealt with confrontation. Instead of pointless arguments or personal rejection, we should look at the opportunity to consider the viewpoint of others, especially those with whom we strongly disagree. Listening to the speaker and considering the viewpoint does not mean that we must accept ideas contrary to our Faith, but the gift of Counsel encourages us to think more deeply about why we believe, and to share those beliefs with others.

Indeed, the position of a law faculty member often includes the gift of Piety, in which Pope Francis explains how piety impacts our treatment of others.

The gift of piety means to be truly capable of rejoicing with those who rejoice, of weeping with those who weep, of being close to those who are lonely or in anguish, of correcting those in error, of consoling the afflicted, of welcoming and helping those in need. The gift of piety is closely tied to gentleness. The gift of piety which the Holy

⁴³ CLINICAL PROGRAMS: Juris Doctor (JD). *Barry University School of Law*, (Accessed on 5 August 2025), <https://www.barry.edu/en/academics/law/jd-law/clinical-programs> ("Our Law School is committed to providing legal services that are consistent with the University's mission of making a contribution to the society we are all part of. All of our Clinical Programs are taught by professors, private and public lawyers and trial judges who are focused on assisting our students in developing the skills necessary to succeed after law school. Consistent with this goal, our clinical and externships programs contain an important classroom component which allows students to get the most from their practical experiences").

⁴⁴ Joanmarie DAVOLI: Harvesting Humans. *Belmont law Review* 13, (2025), <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5213622>, (forthcoming) (Such as the ongoing genocide being committed by the Communist Chinese Government as they kill innocent ethnic minorities and sell their organs to wealthy buyers: "Harvesting Humans" (Forced transplant industry in the PRC)).

⁴⁵ POPE FRANCIS: General Audience: St. Peter's Square. *The Vatican*, (7 May 2014), <https://tinyurl.com/5azjap2w>.

Spirit gives us makes us gentle, makes us calm, patient, at peace with God, at the service of others with gentleness.⁴⁶

For to teach is to be at the service of others. We are serving our students by sharing ideas and information, by training their minds in how to approach intellectual ideas and analyze conflicting information. The best teachers are gentle, calm and patient, which also brings us peace with God. The haughty and the rude might frighten or intimidate, but they rarely effectively teach. Infusing Catholicism into our teaching means that Catholic educators learn to truly rejoice with others, mourn with others, correct those in error and act with gentleness.

With the demands of family life and career expectations, Law faculty may often desperately need the Gift of Fortitude, because, as Pope Francis explained,

sometimes we may be tempted to give in to laziness, or worse, to discouragement, especially when faced with the hardships and trials of life. In these cases, let us not lose heart, let us invoke the Holy Spirit so that through the gift of fortitude he may lift our heart and communicate new strength and enthusiasm to our life and to our following of Jesus.⁴⁷

Part of that strength and enthusiasm originates with the subjects we teach and research that lead us closer to God. When Catholic educators focus on issues of importance to our Faith, we are less likely to become lazy or discouraged and more likely to feel closer to Christ.

In research, the Holy Spirit's Gift of Knowledge urges the Catholic scholar to search for areas of light and accomplishment. For it is in law that we seek justice, and we believe that justice does exist. Pope Francis reminds us that

if God sees creation as good, as a beautiful thing, then we too must take this attitude and see that creation is a good and beautiful thing. Now, this is the gift of knowledge that allows us to see this beauty, therefore we praise God, giving thanks to him for having granted us so much beauty.⁴⁸

As the Gift of Knowledge teaches us that there is beauty in the human mind, created in God's likeness, that encourages curiosity, creativity, thoughtfulness and kindness. Teaching offers Law Faculty the opportunity to protect freedom of religion so that the rights of everyone to praise God are protected.⁴⁹ Knowledge embodies searching for the truth and justice inherent in the law.

⁴⁶ POPE FRANCIS: General Audience: St. Peter's Square. *The Vatican*, (4 June 2014), <https://tinyurl.com/33t5htmn>.

⁴⁷ POPE FRANCIS: General Audience: St. Peter's Square. *The Vatican*, (14 May 2014), <https://tinyurl.com/4a6zuuye>.

⁴⁸ POPE FRANCIS: General Audience: St. Peter's Square. *The Vatican*, (21 May 2014), <https://tinyurl.com/y35tec5r>.

⁴⁹ Legal Work. *University of Notre Dame School of Law, Lindsay and Matt Moroun Religious Liberty Clinic*, (Accessed on 5 August 2025), <https://religiousliberty.nd.edu/clinic/> ("The Lindsay and Matt Moroun Religious Liberty Clinic is a teaching law practice that educates, forms, and prepares Notre Dame law students to become the rising generation of religious liberty leaders by training students in the practice of the law as they defend religious freedom for all people").

These gifts of the Holy Spirit enable us to understand how to best infuse Catholicism into teaching and research, just as we infuse our faith into every decision in our lives.

I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’

Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?

When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?

When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’

And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’⁵⁰

As the teacher looks out at the classroom filled with students, and as the scholar selects an area to research, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit guide us ever closer to following the teachings of Christ. In our work, we should always consider the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the prisoner, and whomever is treated as the least among us – for we are called to serve them in both our personal and our professional lives.

Finally, Law faculty spend a great deal of their time thinking, and as with everything, there is guidance from God. As Saint Paul wrote, “whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”⁵¹ And write on them and teach on them. And recognize that these things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, good, and virtuous all come from God. As these things are infused into your thoughts, they will also be infused into your teaching and your research.

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⁵⁰ *Matthew* 25: 36–40. NABRE – New American Bible Revised Edition. <https://www.bible.com/versions/463-nabre-new-american-bible-revised-edition>

⁵¹ *Phillipians* 4:8. (Saint Paul in his Epistle to the *Phillipians*). NABRE – New American Bible Revised Edition. <https://www.bible.com/versions/463-nabre-new-american-bible-revised-edition>

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