

A Catholic University between Ideal and Reality: Enriched with My Experiences at Fu Jen Catholic University (1999-2012), Taiwan

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“Truth is so obscure in these times, and falsehood so established,
that, unless we love the truth, we cannot know it.”

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)¹

Abbreviations:

EcE *Ex corde Ecclesiae*

GeS *Gaudium et Spes*

Introduction: A Historical Sketch of the Development of a University as an Originally Catholic University

Political, social and spiritual factors in medieval Europe led during the 12th and 13th centuries to formation of the earliest universities there as cooperative corporation of teachers and students (*universitas magistrorum et scholarium*).² “These universities must be characterized as a genuine product of the pope-oriented Christian (Germ.: papstchristlich) Europe. Neither the ancient world nor other cultures organized their cultivation of learning, learned efforts, and learned instructions in such a way.”³ They evolved from much older Christian cathedral schools⁴ and monastic schools (*scholae monasticae*).⁵ The Church’s monasteries and cathedral schools played a great role in preserving and development of the early scholastic tradition. Of course, the learned five great schools of ancient Greek philosophy (Platonist, Aristotelian, Stoic, Epicurean, and Skeptic philosophies), the learned academies of Roman Empire (27 BC-395 AD;

¹ Blaise Pascal. *Thoughts*. The Harvard Classics. 1909–14. Section XIV: “Appendix: Polemical Fragments,” no. 864 (<http://www.bartleby.com/48/1/14.html>; retrieved 29 January 2018).

² Cf. Schlachter 1938 and Van Scoyoc 1962, pp. 322-333.

³ Hammerstein 2001, col. 213 (my translation).

⁴ Riche 1978, pp. 126-128 and 282-290.

⁵ Kottje 1999, cols. 1226-1228.

395-476 [Western] 395-1453 [Eastern]), those of Islam (madrasas),⁶ and those – what for us is especially important – in China⁷ can only be counted as their predecessors.

Here I would like to make my first digression. During my work at Fu Jen Catholic University (1999-2012), I noticed that its one-semester course in the first year – “Daxue rumen” 大學入門 (Introduction into the University) took advantage of this Christian origin of a university in the material which was given to the students. However, it lacked a deepened, comparative perspective of traditional Chinese-European education.

The early medieval university (*studium generale*⁸) differed from what we today understand by a university. As above already stated, these universities were cooperative corporations of teachers and students, “more similar to today’s civic organizations, such as the Rotary Club or the local Chamber of Commerce.”⁹ Scholasticism as an independent search for knowledge with the desire to link faith (dogma) to reason and science became a learned method of critical thought which dominated teaching by the academics of medieval universities in Europe from 11th to 16th century. During the Middle Ages Scholasticism was also a program of employing that method in articulating and defending dogma in an increasingly pluralistic context.¹⁰ The first continental European universities, like Bologna in 1119 and Paris 1175, delivered a model for universities in other countries in mainland Europe (e.g., in my homeland – Poland: the Jagiellonian University in 1364). The universities in Oxford – the evidence of teaching as far back as 1096 – and in Cambridge since 1226 also became a paragon of a university in the Anglo-Saxon culture. These universities as cooperative organization of cultivation of learning, learned efforts, and learned instructions established faculties of classical learning with theology at first place, then law,

⁶ I mean here the so-called “Islamic Golden Age” as the era in the history of Islam (8th-13th c.), during which in various parts of Islamic world flourished education (Islamic art of schools/universities), science, and economic development. Cf. Saliba 1994, pp. 245, 250, 256-257.

⁷ The history of education in China began with the birth of the Chinese culture. From the very beginning, the Chinese nobles set up educational establishments for their offspring. Since legendary times, there were the schools to teach the youth nobles which were divided into “lower” (*xiangxiang* 下庠) and “upper” (*shangxiang* 上庠). The basis of education for these students in ancient China (Zhou dynasty, 1122-256 BC) was to master the so-called six arts (*liusyì* 六藝): rites (*li* 禮), music (*yue* 樂), archery (*she* 射), charioteering (*yu* 御), calligraphy (*shu* 書), and mathematics (*shu* 數). Since then education has always been seen in China as a symbol of power and prestige. Cf. Cleverley 1991 and Lee 2000.

⁸ *Studium generale* as the old customary name for a medieval university meant a place where students from everywhere were welcome, not merely those of the local district or region. Cf. Rashdall 1895, vol. 1.

⁹ Sheridan 2009, p. 8.

¹⁰ Goldschmidt – Vorkamp 2008, p. 642.

medicine, and of seven liberal arts.¹¹ The aim of the European university has remained more or less constant: “to promote intellectual growth ... [and] to train students for the professions.”¹²

During the European Renaissance of the 14th-17th centuries and Reformation in 16th- and 17th century, Scholasticism declined step by step at the European universities. From the 16th to 18th century early modern rationalism in Europe tried to liberate reason from (Christian) faith and from the Church’s authority. In the wake of these events, the freedom and autonomy of scholarship and its relation to the state became main issues. In the age of enlightened despotism and enlightened absolutism¹³ in the 18th and 19th centuries, these issues were more and more urgent. In this context, Wilhelm von Humboldt’s (1767-1835) university concept is of great importance. This concept is called “Humboldtian Model of Higher Education” which emerged in the early 19th century and core idea of which is a holistic combination of research and studies. It attempts to integrate the arts and (natural) sciences with research to achieve both comprehensive general learning and cultural knowledge. This holistic model included a unity in teaching and research, the enlisting of science in service of truth, the pursuit of higher learning in the philosophy faculty, bringing together teachers and students in a common search for truth, freedom of study for students (“Lernfreiheit,” contrasted with the prescriptive curricula of the French system), and corporate autonomy for universities despite their being funded by the state. This 19th-century university idea of Wilhelm von Humboldt was expected to have been realized in the foundation of the University of Berlin in 1810 under his influence, and this university was renamed the Humboldt University of Berlin after World War II.¹⁴

Apart from religious, intellectual, and political factors, we have to mention the period of industrialization which began from the mid-18th to early 19th century in certain areas in Europe and North America (starting in Great Britain, followed by Belgium, Germany, and France) which since then have had a great impact on the nature of the present-day university. This was the time of economic and then social changes that transformed an agrarian society into an industrial

¹¹ The *trivium* was the lower, preparatory division of the seven liberal arts which comprised grammar, logic, and rhetoric; the *quadrivium* is the four subjects, or arts. It consisted of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. In turn, the *quadrivium* was considered preparatory work for the study of philosophy (sometimes called the “liberal art par excellence”) and theology.

¹² Goldschmidt – Vortkamp 2008, p. 642.

¹³ During the 18th and 19th centuries in Europe, enlightened despots were authoritarian, i.e., non-democratic rulers who understood their political power with the help of the ideas of the Enlightenment as an attempt to benefit first his people. Absolute monarchs were those in that time who were only influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment.

¹⁴ Cf. Benner 2003 and Wagner 1995.

society, involving the extensive re-organization of an economy for the purpose of manufacturing. This resulted in the development of technical colleges and the linkage of scientific knowledge with practical and commercial practice.¹⁵ At the beginning of this development, a distinction was made between “classical” universities and “technical” colleges. However, this difference was modified especially in the 20th century.

Nowadays in such countries like the USA, Great Britain, and Germany, many universities emphasize their role in shaping future technology by being the testbeds, i.e., platforms for conducting rigorous, transparent, and replicable testing of scientific theories, computational tools, and new technologies. Traditional education seems to have contributed greatly to the present-day levels of industrial evolution and technological advancement. However, it seems not enough! The need to keep up with technological development renders humanities unimportant! It goes so far that it is not uncommon to hear today, i.e., in the era of enormous development of (natural) sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, that liberal arts degrees are relatively worthless.¹⁶

Until today, with almost 1000-year university tradition¹⁷ of organized cultivation of learning, learned efforts, and scholarly instructions, the universities have still remained the similar structure despite enormous changes in intellectual, cultural, social, economic, and political dimensions of the world history.¹⁸ Here are the following four “constant” structural elements of a university: 1) a community and fellowship of teachers and students whose corporate life was much reduced with the development of a university from its monastic beginnings. Only in some British and American universities, the tradition of a corporate life is still to some extent maintained; 2) Universities are independent corporations, i.e., they function as the groups of people authorized to act as a single entity (as a legal person) and recognized as such in law. As such, they have certain privileges in setting their curricula, in owning property, in making statutes, and in other areas, such as economic matters. Nowadays most of the universities are

¹⁵ Kemp 1993.

¹⁶ “China Education”: “Why science, technology, engineering and mathematics are over-prioritised in higher education”: Nations eye education as a tool for economic competition, pushing students into sciences and technology while neglecting the liberal arts ...” in: <https://scroll.in/article/855581/why-science-technology-engineering-and-mathematics-are-over-prioritised-in-higher-education> (retrieved 28 January 2018).

¹⁷ As far as Oxford is concerned, there is some evidence of teaching there as far back as 1096. Cf. “Oxford: Introduction and history,” in <https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/history?wssl=1> (retrieved 28 January 2018).

¹⁸ Goldschmidt – Vorkamp 2008, pp. 643-644.

state-controlled; 3) Universities should normally enjoy full-scale autonomy as far as teaching and research are concerned. However, in this area, i.e., in academic freedom and institutional autonomy, there is, of course, no uniform trend to see in the world; 4) Universities aim at the universal validity of the acquired knowledge,¹⁹ and this search for establishing a universally agreed corpus of human knowledge is seen more and more in an intensified globalized interaction which is also to be seen at academic levels, e.g., in many international and globalized exchanges of shared research fields.

The situation of Catholic universities is very different, and it depends greatly to which part of the world we turn our eyes. In view of Christianity, the “secularization theory” seems further to prove well founded. Its theorists demonstrate widespread declines in the prevalence of religious belief /faith throughout the West, particularly in Europe. Sociologists of religions like Mark Chaves (Duke University)²⁰ and N. Jay Demerath (University of Massachusetts)²¹ have even introduced the idea of neo-secularization in order to stress the decline of religious authority and its ability to influence society which means that individuals increasingly look outside of Christian religion for authoritative positions.²² Thus, it takes not a surprise that we can state the growing secularization of not only Catholics, but also Catholic academic institutions – and this not in the United States of America.²³ One of the great visions of the Vatican II (1962-1965) was that we Christians should anew change the world from within in order to configure it more perfectly to Christ as the heart, meaning, and guide of our life (cf. *Lumen Gentium* 5; *Gaudium et Spes*, 10, 21, 22, 40; *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 2, 5-8). However, secularism seems to have been – slowly but surely – configuring us Christians more and more to the world (cf. Rom. 12:2).

What about Fu Jen Catholic University in Taiwan? It is a comprehensive, pontifical university founded by the Holy See in Peking in 1925, and was rebuilt in Taiwan in 1961. Thus, it belongs to the missionary tradition of Christianity which took education as one of most powerful means to spread Christian faith in China. We will turn to this topic in part three of this

¹⁹ Cf. Marinopoulou 2017, p. 33.

²⁰ Cf. his contributions 1994 and 2011.

²¹ Demerath – Williams 1992.

²² Cf. also Yamane 1997, pp. 109-122 and Bruce 2002.

²³ Cf. D’Costa 2005. This book shows how theology – together with philosophy – lost its dominating role within the history of the Western university. See especially Chapter One: “Theology’s Babylonian Captivity in the Modern University,” pp. 1-37; Chapter Two: “Babylon in the Church: The United States and England,” pp. 38-75; and “Epilogue: Theology: The Church at the Heart of the Christian University Proclaiming the Word to the World,” pp. 215-218.

contribution.

The Chinese themselves looking back at their history of encounter with the West with the help of Christianity talk about the phenomenon called *Xixue Dong jian* 西學東漸 (The Eastward Dissemination of Western Learning, i.e., to China).²⁴ They divide this history into two periods. The first one belongs to the time from the end of 16th to 18th century, connected with the Jesuit “scientific mission” in China. Accepted as foreign literati, the then China Jesuit missionaries introduced Western scientific European knowledge – astronomy, calendar-making, geography (map-making), mechanics (hydraulics), and mathematics (geometry).²⁵

The second period of the so-called “Eastward Dissemination of Western Learning” begins with 19th century and goes on to the present day. In the 19th century, Protestantism was the leading agent in this process of scientific exchange. From the beginning of their Christian mission to China, the Protestants developed schools and established hospitals practicing Western medicine. The Catholics did not want to lag behind the Protestants in these areas of education and health care, although Catholic Church in China could not catch up with the Protestant one until the rise of People’s Republic of China in 1949! And this year marks also the end of foreign Christian missionary work in China.

As to the Christian school system being implemented in China, the Chinese imperial government and educated Chinese viewed it with great suspicion and it was often very difficult for the Christian mission schools to attract pupils. The schools provided basic education especially to poor Chinese, both boys and girls. Before the rise of the Republic of China in 1912, they would have not received any formal schooling. Many Christian colleges in China turned later into full-fledged universities (16 were founded by the Protestants before 1949).²⁶ Most of them were supported by American Protestant agencies and had a specific American educational flavor. In comparison to the Protestants, the Catholic missionaries in China managed to establish only 3 Catholic universities in China.²⁷ One of them was, of course, Fu Jen Catholic

²⁴ It seems that the phrase *Xixue Dong jian* appeared first in 1915, being a title translation of Yung Wing’s (Rong Hong 容閔, 1828-1912) English memoir *My Life In China and America* into Chinese by Yun Tieqiao 惲鐵樵 (1878-1935) and Xu Fenshi 徐鳳石 as *Xixue Dong jian: Rong Chunfu xiansheng zixu* 西學東漸記:容純甫先生自敘.

²⁵ Mungello 2005 and *id.* 2015.

²⁶ Liu Kwang-Ching 1960, pp. 71-78 and Bays – Widmer (eds.) 2009.

²⁷ Taveirne 2006, pp. 5-14.

University Peking!²⁸

1. John Henry Cardinal Newman's *The Idea of a University*, 1873

Newman's (1801-1890) *The Idea of a University*²⁹ is until now one of the basic and classic works on the university and its liberal education. It is – like most Newman's books – an occasional work, i.e., not a systematic treatise on a university. Actually, the whole work *The Idea of a University* comprises two books: the *Discourses on the Scope and Nature of University Education* (1852), which consists of Newman's lectures in prelude of launching the Catholic University of Ireland and is wrongly taken *pars pro toto* for the whole work. The second book is *Lectures and Essays on University Subjects* (1859), which Newman wrote as the founding president of the above-mentioned university.³⁰ The first book seems somewhat more theoretical, and the second is more practical.

Newman's conversion process to the Roman Catholic Church from the Anglican Church in the years of 1839 to 1845 reveal a struggle within his soul which meant tensions between an intellect of sympathy and affection versus reason, private judgment versus authority, and “cold” logic versus organic life.³¹ Even before his conversion, he believed and tried to go on a middle way between free thinking and moral authority, i.e., to be able to respect the rights of the freedom of knowledge and the rights of religious revelation. It seems to be one of his basic convictions which were present in his readiness to build a Catholic university.³² John Cornwell describes in his recent biography of Newman as “...a portrait of a man who continues to speak to us from beyond the grave”³³ Yes, Newman is a person who speaks to us from beyond the grave, and

²⁸ The other two Catholic universities were run by the French Jesuits: the Private Fudan 復旦 University in Shanghai, founded in 1917, and Jin Gu daxue 津沽大学 (French: Université de Tsin Ku) in Tianjin, founded in 1921 (the original name was in French: Institut des Hautes Études et Commerciales des Tientsin with its Chinese equivalent: Tianjin gongshang daxue 天津工商大学).

²⁹ The standard version of John Henry Cardinal Newman's *The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated* is the one edited by Ian T. Ker in 1976 (Oxford: Oxford University Press). Here I use for the reference of this book the version of The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Idea of a University Defined and Illustrated: In Nine Discourses Delivered to the Catholics of Dublin* by John Henry Newman; the pdf version to found on the website <https://archive.org/details/theideaofauniver24526gut> (retrieved 1 February 2018).

³⁰ Ker 2011, p. 20.

³¹ Cf. his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (A Defense of One's Own Life), published in 1864 in response to Charles Kingsley of the Church of England after Newman leaved his position as the Anglican vicar of St. Mary's in Oxford. Online: <https://archive.org/stream/a599543500newmuoft#page/n5/mode/2up> (retrieved 20 March 2018).

³² Cf. Cornwell 2010, pp. 122-127 and 154-172.

³³ Cornwell 2010, p. 11.

it is especially in view of his ideas on the role of a university. Although these ideas are until now controversial,³⁴ his *Idea of a University* has, however, influenced enormously discussions on the role of higher education around our globe.

Here is my second digression: As I was Director of the Development Office for Mission and Identity of the Society of the Divine Word Missionaries at Fu Jen from 2000 to 2004, I dreamt to establish a Fu Jen book series with the title “Works on a Catholic University in Translation.” Cardinal Newman’s book was the first one to be translated. However, this dream of mine and – in the meantime doctor of theology – of Mrs. Lü Cihan 呂慈函 could unfortunately not be realized. I think the idea of establishing such book series is still worthwhile considering.

Nowadays more and more politicians and educationists consider universities in an instrumental and instrumentalist way – as a means of directly producing labor force and “professional idiots” required by economy and technology – Newman’s educational philosophy saw the university as a place where “knowledge is capable of being its own end”:

Such is the constitution of the human mind, that any kind of knowledge, if it be really such, is its own reward. And if this is true of all knowledge, it is true also of that special Philosophy, which I have made to consist in a comprehensive view of truth in all its branches, of the relations of science to science, of their mutual bearings, and their respective values (p. 128).

Already in this citation, Newman’s advocacy of a “liberal education” as the principal goal and purpose of a university comes into the foreground. What Newman calls here “special Philosophy” is “real cultivation of mind” (p. 9) which he defines as “the intellect ... properly trained and formed to have a connected view or grasp of things” (p. 10). In his definition of this “special Philosophy,” Newman says: “In default of a recognized term, I have called the perfection or virtue of the intellect by the name of philosophy, philosophical knowledge, enlargement of mind, or illumination” (pp. 151-152). Thus, at the heart of his educational philosophy is his concern that university students keep and develop their ability to think.³⁵

What has made me curious about Newman’s understanding of a liberal education, are the

³⁴ Mlinar 2013, pp. 131-148.

³⁵ Cf. Ker 2011, p. 20.

following words:

Liberal Education makes not the Christian, not the Catholic, but the gentleman. It is well to be a gentleman, it is well to have a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste, a candid, equitable, dispassionate mind, a noble and courteous bearing in the conduct of life;—these are the connatural qualities of a large knowledge; they are the objects of a University (p. 146).

The term “gentleman” used by Newman (see also pp. 4, 5, 9, 117, 136, 137, 138 etc.) was from the very beginning associated in my mind with the Confucius’ education ideal of *junzi* 君子 presented in *Lunyu*. This word *junzi* was translated into a “gentleman,” also as a “superior person /man,” or a “noble man,” or a “cultured man,” or a “man of superior virtue,” or even “exalted person” etc. To start with, I thought of the “mysterious” saying of Confucius:

子曰。君子不器。(Lunyu 2:12)

The Master said: “The gentleman is not a utensil / not an instrument.”

My note: A utensil or an instrument is predetermined by its concrete functions, shape, and capacity etc. A gentleman (*junzi*) is not confined to his role or restricted in his capacity, and his purpose is more or less the accomplishment of virtuosity of virtue and moral life.

[Comment of A. Charles Muller] “The noble man is not a technician, to be used by others to do a single job. On another level, his mind is not narrowly oriented by a specific task. The *junzi* thinks broadly and does not limit himself quickly into a certain world-view, and cannot easily be used as a cog in someone else’s machine.”³⁶

Against the background of this one example of *junzi*, let us cite again Newman:

... when I speak of a Knowledge which is its own end, when I call it liberal knowledge, or a gentleman’s knowledge, when I educate for it, and make it the scope of a University (p. 140).

³⁶ *The Analects of Confucius* 論語, translated by A. Charles Muller (<http://www.acmuller.net/con-dao/analects.html#div-3>; retrieved on 21 March 2018).

In this context it is interesting to note that Newman regretted that there was at that time no recognized English word to express the idea of intellectual cultivation or the cultivated intellect:

It were well if the English, like the Greek language, possessed some definite word to express, simply and generally, intellectual proficiency or perfection, such as "health," as used with reference to the animal frame, and "virtue," with reference to our moral nature. I am not able to find such a term;—talent, ability, genius, belong distinctly to the raw material, which is the subject-matter, not to that excellence which is the result of exercise and training. When we turn, indeed, to the particular kinds of intellectual perfection, words are forthcoming for our purpose, as, for instance, judgment, taste, and skill; yet even these belong, for the most part, to powers or habits bearing upon practice or upon art, and not to any perfect condition of the intellect, considered in itself. Wisdom, again, is certainly a more comprehensive word than any other, but it has a direct relation to conduct, and to human life. Knowledge, indeed, and Science express purely intellectual ideas, but still not a state or quality of the intellect; for knowledge, in its ordinary sense, is but one of its circumstances, denoting a possession or a habit; and science has been appropriated to the subject-matter of the intellect, instead of belonging in English, as it ought to do, to the intellect itself (p. 151).

There is still another aspect in Newman's *The Idea of a University* that has made me heedful in view of Chinese culture. His thoughts on university can be read in line with support of a university which is built on the "family model" rather than "hotel model." In our present age of relativism, most universities seem to live by the hotel model, i.e., like in the hotel man people dwell in the same building and admittedly meet each other in the corridors. However, they live separate and isolated lives and share nothing essential and existentially meaningful. Although there are not many direct citations which can corroborate my reading, I still want to quote two examples:

1) ... domestic feelings and polished manners are best cultivated in the family circle and in good society, in the observance of the sacred ties which unite father, mother, and child, in the correlative claims and duties of citizenship, in the exercise of disinterested loyalty and enlightened patriotism. With this apology, such as it is, they pass over the consideration of the human mind and its powers and works, "in solemn silence," in their scheme of University Education (pp. 74-75).

2) Now observe, Gentlemen, how exactly this bears out what I have been saying. It is just

so far true, as to be able to instill what is false, far as the author was from any such design. I grant, then, that, ordinarily, beggary is not the means of moral improvement; and that the orderly habits which attend upon the hot pursuit of gain, not only may effect an external decency, but may at least shelter the soul from the temptations of vice. Moreover, these habits of good order guarantee regularity in a family or household, and thus are accidentally the means of good; moreover, they lead to the education of its younger branches, and they thus accidentally provide the rising generation with a virtue or a truth which the present has not: but without going into these considerations, further than to allow them generally, and under circumstances, let us rather contemplate what the author's direct assertion is. He says, "the endeavour to accumulate," the words should be weighed, and for what? "for enjoyment;"—"to accumulate the means of future subsistence and enjoyment, is, to the mass of mankind, the great source," not merely a source, but the great source, and of what? of social and political progress?—such an answer would have been more within the limits of his art,—no, but of something individual and personal, "of moral improvement." The soul, in the case of "the mass of mankind," improves in moral excellence from this more than any thing else, viz., from heaping up the means of enjoying this world in time to come! I really should on every account be sorry, Gentlemen, to exaggerate, but indeed one is taken by surprise, one is startled, on meeting with so very categorical a contradiction of our Lord, St. Paul, St. Chrysostom, St. Leo, and all Saints (p. 116).

What I want to stress is that Newman's idea of a university should be built on the "family model." This means that the members of this "university family" should share a common life, a mutual culture, a give-and-take attitude to each other. They should have time to meet for discussion and make arguments around a common table on matters of their mutual concern. Besides these two aspects in the thought of Newman which came to my mind while reading his *Idea of a University*, i.e., the concept of "gentleman" as the final result of university education and that of a university built on the "family model," there must be, of course, still much more valuable points in his thoughts. Now let us turn to the very important and recent Church document on Catholic universities – *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (hereafter: *EcE*).

2. Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (August 15, 1990)

The promulgation of John Paul II's apostolic constitution on Catholic universities *Ex Corde*

Ecclesiae (“From the Heart of the Church”³⁷ (天主教大學憲章：天主教大學產生於天主教會的核心³⁸) was a milestone in the history of Church’s governance of Catholic universities. This ecclesiastical document embodies the teachings of many documents of Vatican II (1962-1965), especially *Gaudium et Spes* (hereafter: *GeS*; the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, promulgated by Pope Paul VI on 7 December 1965³⁹). The themes from *GeS* which were taken up by *EcE* were as follows⁴⁰:

1) Solidarity between the Church and the world: The Church can teach the world and simultaneously also learn from the world. *GeS* aimed to give new and concrete words of advice for Catholic Church how to how to interact with world of today which was developing faster and faster. E.g., *GeS* 1: “That is why this community [i.e., the Church] realizes that it is truly linked with mankind and its history by the deepest of bonds” and “For the council yearns to explain to everyone how it conceives of the presence and activity of the Church in the world of today.

2) Its second theme stresses the ability of Catholic Christians to read “the signs of the time”:⁴¹ Thus, we read in *GeS* 4:

... the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other. We must therefore recognize and understand the world in which we live, its explanations, its

³⁷ English translation is available on the Vatican website:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_15081990_ex-corde-ecclesiae.html (retrieved 26 March 2018).

³⁸ Chinese translation is available on Fu Jen Catholic University website:

<http://www.fju.edu.tw/aboutFju.jsp?labelID=2> (retrieved 26 March 2018).

³⁹ English translation is available on the Vatican website:

https://web.archive.org/web/20110411023509/http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html (retrieved 26 March 2018).

⁴⁰ Sheridan 2009, pp. 108-137.

⁴¹ Jesus Christ emphasized how utmost important it is to understand the significance of the times in which we live. The Jewish religious leaders of at that time (i.e., the Pharisees and Sadducees) asked Him to give them a sign from heaven. Jesus used this opportunity to explain a very important principle: “He replied, ‘In the evening you say, “It will be fine; there’s a red sky,” and in the morning, “Stormy weather today; the sky is red and overcast”.’ You know how to read the face of the sky, but you cannot read the signs of the times” (Matthew 16:2-3). This phrase was used by Pope John XXIII when he convoked the council, in the Apostolic Constitution, *Humanae salutis*, with which he solemnly convoked Vatican II on 25 December 1961. Since then, this Jesus’ word is a hermeneutical key of the Catholic faithful to understanding their role in the world.

longings, and its often dramatic characteristics. Some of the main features of the modern world can be sketched as follows.

A similar thought is also expressed in *GeS* 44:

With the help of the Holy Spirit, it is the task of the entire People of God, especially pastors and theologians, to hear, distinguish and interpret the many voices of our age, and to judge them in the light of the divine word, so that revealed truth can always be more deeply penetrated, better understood and set forth to greater advantage.

3) The third theme of *GeS* is the mystery of humankind. In *GeS* 3 we read:

Though mankind is stricken with wonder at its own discoveries and its power, it often raises anxious questions about the current trend of the world, about the place and role of man in the universe, about the meaning of its individual and collective strivings, and about the ultimate destiny of reality and of humanity.

This topic is also embodied in *GeS* 8, 10, 22.

4) The fourth theme which runs like a unifying thread through *GeS* is Christ as the answer to all things and the key to full humanity. E.g., in *GeS* 10 we read:

... Christ, who died and was raised up for all, can through His Spirit offer man the light and the strength to measure up to his supreme destiny...

For relevant statements we can consult the following parts: *GeS* 18,⁴² 22,⁴³ many others (*GeS* 28, 41, and 42).

⁴² "Christ won this victory when He rose to life, for by His death He freed man from death. Hence to every thoughtful man a solidly established faith provides the answer to his anxiety about what the future holds for him. At the same time faith gives him the power to be united in Christ with his loved ones who have already been snatched away by death; faith arouses the hope that they have found true life with God."

⁴³ "The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him Who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear. It is not surprising, then, that in Him all the aforementioned truths find their root and attain their crown ... Through Christ and in Christ, the riddles of sorrow and death grow meaningful. Apart from His Gospel, they overwhelm us. Christ has risen, destroying death by His death; He has lavished life upon us so that, as sons in the Son, we can cry out in the Spirit; Abba, Father."

5) The fifth important theme of *GeS* is the stress of the social character of human persons. In *GeS* 12 we read among others:

But God did not create man as a solitary, for from the beginning "male and female he created them" (Gen. 1:27). Their companionship produces the primary form of interpersonal communion. For by his innermost nature man is a social being, and unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential.

Other relevant utterances can be found in *GeS* 24⁴⁴ and 32.⁴⁵

6) As the last, i.e., the sixth theme which we want to stress among many possible themes in *GeS* in view of *EcE* is the understanding of the Church as a sacrament. *GeS* 42 says:

The promotion of unity belongs to the innermost nature of the Church, for she is, "thanks to her relationship with Christ, a sacramental sign and an instrument of intimate union with God, and of the unity of the whole human race."

This thought is expressed more explicitly in *GeS* 45:

While helping the world and receiving many benefits from it, the Church has a single intention: that God's kingdom may come, and that the salvation of the whole human race may come to pass. For every benefit which the People of God during its earthly pilgrimage can offer to the human family stems from the fact that the Church is "the universal sacrament of salvation", simultaneously manifesting and exercising the mystery of God's love.

The above six themes are, of course, not directly connected with the topic of Catholic universities or Catholic higher education. For us Christians, they are, however, consistent with the human person's desire to learn, search deeply for truth and the meaning of life and to look for such

⁴⁴ "God, Who has fatherly concern for everyone, has willed that all men should constitute one family and treat one another in a spirit of brotherhood. For having been created in the image of God, Who "from one man has created the whole human race and made them live all over the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26), all men are called to one and the same goal, namely God Himself."

⁴⁵ "For while providing the substance of life for themselves and their families, men and women are performing their activities in a way which appropriately benefits society. They can justly consider that by their labor they are unfolding the Creator's work, consulting the advantages of their brother men, and are contributing by their personal industry to the realization in history of the divine plan."

answers in Jesus Christ.

Other Vatican II documents which were important for *EcE* are the following:

1) *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church; promulgated by Pope Paul VI on 21 November 1964⁴⁶) with the topic of evangelization (already beginning with Part 1). This thought of the Church's missionary activity is also explicitly stated *Ad Gentes* (Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church; promulgated by Pope Paul VI on 7 December 1965⁴⁷):

The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father (Ad Gentes 2).

2) *Dei Verbum* (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation; promulgated by Pope Paul VI on 18 November 1965⁴⁸) which can be seen in *EcE* in parts 29 and 50. Especially the parts 8-10 of *Dei Verbum* which are concerned with preaching and the interaction of Scripture with the Church's teaching office (magisterium ecclesiae);

3) *EcE* embodies authoritatively *Gravissimum educationis* (Declaration on Christian Education; promulgated on 28 October 1965 by Pope Paul VI⁴⁹) which addresses Catholic universities. In this document is especially part 10 of great importance.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ English translation is available on the Vatican website:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html (retrieved 27 March 2018).

⁴⁷ English translation is available on the Vatican website:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651207_ad-gentes_en.html (retrieved 27 March 2018).

⁴⁸ English translation is available on the Vatican website:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html (retrieved 27 March 2018).

⁴⁹ English translation is available on the Vatican website:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_gravissimum-educationis_en.html (retrieved 27 March 2018).

⁵⁰ 10. "Catholic Colleges and Universities

The Church is concerned also with schools of a higher level, especially colleges and universities. In those schools dependent on her she intends that by their very constitution individual subjects be pursued according to their own principles, method, and liberty of scientific inquiry, in such a way that an ever deeper understanding in these fields may be obtained and that, as questions that are new and current are raised and investigations carefully made according to the example of the doctors of the Church and especially of St. Thomas Aquinas, there may be a deeper realization of the harmony of faith and science. Thus there is accomplished a public, enduring and pervasive influence of the Christian mind in the furtherance of culture and the students of these institutions are molded into

4) *EcE* mentions also *Dignitatis Humanae* (Declaration on Religious Freedom: “Of the Dignity of the Human Person; promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965⁵¹):

The council further declares that the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person as this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself. This right of the human person to religious freedom is to be recognized in the constitutional law whereby society is governed and thus it is to become a civil right (Dignitatis Humanae 2).

Besides the above-mentioned Vatican II documents, the Apostolic Constitution *Sapientia Christiana* (promulgated by John Paul II on 15 April 1979⁵²) can be in a way considered as a forerunner to *EcE*, although in the very text of *EcE Sapientia Christiana* is not extensively cited.

⁵³ Its influence can, however, be especially seen in various canons that regulate Catholic universities based on the code of canon law.

Let us now turn to the main content of *EcE* which during my stay at Fu Jen Catholic University (1999-2012) was the fundamental document – next to the Fu Jen Catholic University’s

men truly outstanding in their training, ready to undertake weighty responsibilities in society and witness to the faith in the world.”

In Catholic universities where there is no faculty of sacred theology there should be established an institute or chair of sacred theology in which there should be lectures suited to lay students. Since science advances by means of the investigations peculiar to higher scientific studies, special attention should be given in Catholic universities and colleges to institutes that serve primarily the development of scientific research.

The sacred synod heartily recommends that Catholic colleges and universities be conveniently located in different parts of the world, but in such a way that they are outstanding not for their numbers but for their pursuit of knowledge. Matriculation should be readily available to students of real promise, even though they be of slender means, especially to students from the newly emerging nations.

Since the destiny of society and of the Church itself is intimately linked with the progress of young people pursuing higher studies,⁽³³⁾ the pastors of the Church are to expend their energies not only on the spiritual life of students who attend Catholic universities, but, solicitous for the spiritual formation of all their children, they must see to it, after consultations between bishops, that even at universities that are not Catholic there should be associations and university centers under Catholic auspices in which priests, religious and laity, carefully selected and prepared, should give abiding spiritual and intellectual assistance to the youth of the university. Whether in Catholic universities or others, young people of greater ability who seem suited for teaching or research should be specially helped and encouraged to undertake a teaching career.”

⁵¹ English translation is available on the Vatican website:

https://web.archive.org/web/20120211202206/http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html (retrieved 27 March 2018).

⁵² English translation is available on the Vatican website:

https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_15041979_sapientia-christiana.html (retrieved 27 March 2018).

⁵³ Sheridan 2009, p. 130.

“Mission Statement”⁵⁴ – for our common search of “what it means for a university to be Catholic.”⁵⁵ The following demand towards university teachers at Catholic universities was for me from the very beginning a very important statement in *EcE*:

University teachers should seek to improve their competence and endeavour to set the content, objectives, methods, and results of research in an individual discipline within the framework of a coherent world vision. Christians among the teachers are called to be witnesses and educators of authentic Christian life, which evidences attained integration between faith and life, and between professional competence and Christian wisdom. All teachers are to be inspired by academic ideals and by the principles of an authentically human life (EcE, Part I, Art. 22).

Thus, we have to look more closely at the structure and key thoughts of *EcE*.⁵⁶ Pope John Paul II’s Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities is divided into two main parts: Part I: “Identity and Mission” and Part II: “General Norms.” The first part is divided into two sections: 1. the identity of a Catholic university and 2. its mission of service. The section dedicated to identity of a Catholic university is then subdivided into three portions: (1) the nature and objectives of a Catholic university, (2) the university community, and (3) the role of the Catholic university in the life of the Church.

The second part of *EcE*, titled “General Norms” consists of seven articles: 1. The nature of these General Norms; 2. The nature of a Catholic university; 3. The Establishment of a Catholic university; 4. The university community; 5. The Catholic university within the Church; 6. Pastoral ministry, 7. Cooperation) plus “Transitional norms” and “Conclusion.” Because of the strong connection of this part with the directives of the Code of Canon Law (promulgated on 25 January 1983 by John Paul II) which is connected with jurisprudence and in the case of Fu Jen Catholic University also with the knowledge of legal system of Taiwan and its part of concerning the respective university law, these parts were not discussed in the public gatherings of Fu Jen academic community.

⁵⁴ The English version of this “Mission Statement” is available on the Fu Jen Catholic University’s website: <http://www.fju.edu.tw/aboutFju.jsp?labelID=23> (retrieved 27 March 2018). The original Chinese version is on: <http://www.fju.edu.tw/aboutFju.jsp?labelID=1> (retrieved 27 March 2018).

⁵⁵ Sheridan 2009, p. 138.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 166-186.

According to *EcE*,⁵⁷ each Catholic university should fulfill the following four essential characteristics:

1. A Christian inspiration⁵⁸ not only of individuals but of the university community as such;
2. A continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge, to which it seeks to contribute by its own research;
3. Fidelity to the Christian message as it comes to us through the Church;
4. An institutional commitment to the service of the people of God and of the human family in their pilgrimage to the transcendent goal which gives meaning life.

This statement is a quotation which comes from the 1972-year document *L'Université Catholique dans le monde moderne. Document final du 2ème Congrès des Délégués des Universités Catholiques* (Rome, 20-29 November 1972, § 1). Another aspect which points out the nature and identity of a Catholic university is the following one (*EcE*, Part I, 15):

In a Catholic University, research necessarily includes (a) the search for an integration of knowledge,⁵⁹ (b) a dialogue between faith and reason,⁶⁰ (c) an ethical concern,⁶¹ and

⁵⁷ *EcE*, Part I, 13; cf. Sheridan 2009, p. 167.

⁵⁸ *EcE*, "Introduction" 7: "In the world today, characterized by such rapid developments in science and technology, the tasks of a Catholic University assume an ever greater importance and urgency. Scientific and technological discoveries create an enormous economic and industrial growth, but they also inescapably require the correspondingly necessary search for meaning in order to guarantee that the new discoveries be used for the authentic good of individuals and of human society as a whole. If it is the responsibility of every University to search for such meaning, a Catholic University is called in a particular way to respond to this need: its Christian inspiration enables it to include the moral, spiritual and religious dimension in its research, and to evaluate the attainments of science and technology in the perspective of the totality of the human person."

⁵⁹ *EcE*, Part I, 16: "*Integration of knowledge* is a process, one which will always remain incomplete; moreover, the explosion of knowledge in recent decades, together with the rigid compartmentalization of knowledge within individual academic disciplines, makes the task increasingly difficult. But a University, and especially a Catholic University, *has to be a 'living union' of individual organisms* dedicated to the search for truth ... It is necessary *to work towards a higher synthesis* of knowledge, in which alone lies the possibility of satisfying that thirst for truth which is profoundly inscribed on the heart of the human person"(19). Aided by the specific contributions of philosophy and theology, university scholars will be engaged in a constant effort to determine the relative place and meaning of each of the various disciplines within the context of a vision of the human person and the world that is enlightened by the Gospel, and therefore by a faith in Christ, the *Logos*, as the centre of creation and of human history."

⁶⁰ *EcE*, Part I, 17: "In promoting this integration of knowledge, a specific part of a Catholic University's task is to promote *dialogue between faith and reason*, so that it can be seen more profoundly how faith and reason bear

*(d) a theological perspective.*⁶²

We do not want to repeat here other important thoughts of *EcE*, because it is always better to read this document now and then in order to internalize its content. This is important, especially for those Catholics who work at Catholic universities. The ideal of a Catholic university conceptualized in *EcE* is an ongoing task to be put into reality by those responsible at Catholic universities. Pope John Paul II says in the “Conclusion” of his *EcE*:

The mission that the Church, with great hope, entrusts to Catholic Universities holds a cultural and religious meaning of vital importance because it concerns the very future of humanity. The renewal requested of Catholic Universities will make them better able to respond to the task of bringing the message of Christ to man, to society, to the various cultures ...

EcC should still become an increasingly read document which is more and more taken as the source of inspiration of what it means for a university to be Catholic!

harmonious witness to the unity of all truth. While each academic discipline retains its own integrity and has its own methods, this dialogue demonstrates that "methodical research within every branch of learning, when carried out in a truly scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, can never truly conflict with faith. For the things of the earth and the concerns of faith derive from the same God". A vital interaction of two distinct levels of coming to know the one truth leads to a greater love for truth itself, and contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the meaning of human life and of the purpose of God's creation."

⁶¹ *EcE*, Part I, 18: "Because knowledge is meant to serve the human person, research in a Catholic University is always carried out with a concern for the *ethical* and *moral implications* both of its methods and of its discoveries. This concern, while it must be present in all research, is particularly important in the areas of science and technology. "It is essential that we be convinced of the priority of the ethical over the technical, of the primacy of the person over things, of the superiority of the spirit over matter. The cause of the human person will only be served if knowledge is joined to conscience. Men and women of science will truly aid humanity only if they preserve 'the sense of the transcendence of the human person over the world and of God over the human person'."

⁶² Fu Jen Catholic University has no theology college of its own. That is why theology plays or more precisely: should play more their special role in Fu Jen Academia Catholica (founded on August 1, 2008). The Academia consists of five academic institutes or centers: the Institute of Scholastic Philosophy, Institute of Church History, Center for the Study of Science and Religion, Monumenta Serica Sinological Research Center, and John Paul II Institute for Research into Dialogue for Peace. There is, however, in the neighborhood of Fu Jen Catholic University the Fu Jen Faculty of Theology St Robert Bellarmine run by the Jesuits which is an independent educational theological institute. In 2012 the Taiwan government and the Vatican signed in view of this institute a mutual recognition in accordance of each other's educational qualifications. Cf. *EcE*, Part I, 1): "*Theology* plays a particularly important role in the search for a synthesis of knowledge as well as in the dialogue between faith and reason. It serves all other disciplines in their search for meaning, not only by helping them to investigate how their discoveries will affect individuals and society but also by bringing a perspective and an orientation not contained within their own methodologies. In turn, interaction with these other disciplines and their discoveries enriches theology, offering it a better understanding of the world today, and making theological research more relevant to current needs. Because of its specific importance among the academic disciplines, every Catholic University should have a faculty, or at least a chair, of theology."

3. Fu Jen Catholic University and My Work Experiences There (1999-2012)

It was my privilege given me by God to work at Fu Jen Catholic University in the years from 1999 to 2012. My stay there meant a turbulent time in which the integration of the three former – more or less – independent unities of Fu Jen Catholic University, i.e., the SVD, Jesuit and diocesan-clergy sections, had been taking place. By the year of 2002 the integration was a fact on the paper, but not in reality. It has turned out to be a long and fatiguing process which – I dare to say – by now is not yet finished!

From 1999 to 2012, I worked in the Center for Holistic Education (teaching courses in Philosophy of Life and Professional Ethics). Besides, I could also teach other subjects, such as Western Sinology (its history and achievements) or (Western) Philosophy of Language. This Center is responsible for integrating the Holistic Education Curriculum of the university. Its basic three subjects are: Introduction to University Life, Philosophy of Life, and Professional Ethics. Thus, at the heart of this education is concern that university students keep and develop their ability to think for themselves, and especially about moral values. This axiological direction of holistic education at Fu Jen was in my conviction principally devoted to building proper ethical attitudes in view of “good” in individual and “right” in social conduct. The blueprint and framework for my work in the Center for Holistic Education was the Mission Statement of Fu Jen Catholic University:

Fu Jen Catholic University is an academic community of students and teachers closely associated in fostering the growth of the whole person, on the basis of Truth, Goodness, Beauty, and Holiness. Fu Jen is committed to a dialogue leading to the integration of Chinese culture and Christian faith; to academic research and the promotion of genuine knowledge; to the development of society and the advancement of humankind.

Goals

Human Dignity

Fu Jen affirms human dignity and recognizes all basic human rights, with a special emphasis on liberty of conscience and academic freedom.

Meaning of Life

Fu Jen promotes search for the meaning of life, development of an integrated value system, and pursuit of high moral standards and professional ethics.

Academic Research

Fu Jen is committed to academic research, to true knowledge and firm action, to the promotion of humanism and to integration of knowledge.

Community Awareness

Fu Jen fosters positive interaction between students, staff, and teachers, and cultivates balanced development of self and community.

Dialogue with Cultures

Fu Jen stresses interaction between Chinese and other cultures, and promotes dialogue between faith and reason.

Religious Cooperation

Fu Jen offers each individual a context in which to acquire a deeper knowledge of the Christian faith, while fostering interreligious dialogue and collaboration.

Spirit of Service

Fu Jen seeks to develop a spirit of compassion and service as well as an active commitment to justice with a view to international solidarity.

Through teaching, research, service and administration, the Fu Jen community strives towards real knowledge of the person, the environment, and God.⁶³

This mission statement is a very good guide to all who want to work at Fu Jen Catholic University and an inexhaustibly important document of inspiration of what it means for a university to be Catholic! It echoes the recent teachings of the Church in the matters of a Catholic university, particularly *EcE*. However, this statement is merely an ideal which should be – in some circumstances – painstakingly put into practice by each university teacher not only at the Center for Holistic Education, but also each, i.e., including non-Christian teachers at the university.

Especially, teaching the course of Philosophy of Life was for me – but also many other teachers – the most difficult one! Why so? There were many reasons for that. For example, one of the gravest reasons was the negative attitude of the undergraduate students (bachelor's students) who looked at it as an inevitably obligatory course at a Catholic university, but for them totally a useless one. This approach echoes the common learning attitude of the undergraduate students which I could experience in 13 years of teaching. The work with graduate students at Fu Jen was

⁶³ "Mission Statement" is available on the Fu Jen Catholic University's website:
<http://www.fju.edu.tw/aboutFju.jsp?labelID=23> (retrieved 27 March 2018). The original Chinese version is on:
<http://www.fju.edu.tw/aboutFju.jsp?labelID=1> (retrieved 27 March 2018).

for me much more rewarding! Another important reason was – what I call – a Taiwanese way of secularization of religious beliefs. Our students have mostly some Chinese popular religious background still experienced by them in common feasts and customs. These are being challenged by (post-)modernity. Catholic faith seems for young Taiwanese not much different from their own. The attitude of reluctance and unwillingness in front of religions appears to be a common response of young people in Taiwan.

Yet another reason must probably have been that the so-called religious experts of Catholic faith, i.e., Catholic priests and religious sisters (nuns) have made the biggest teaching group of this course. In the students' mind seems it understandable that the professionally religious are ready to do such this job – for them with a negative aftertaste of indoctrination and proselytism. Of course, for us foreign teachers – the language was surely a reason for degrading the attractiveness of this course. However, I have experienced while teaching Philosophy of Life in the Advertisement Department (2009-2012) that even my students' real good reports on various topics did not find appreciation among their classmates!

Furthermore, in the years from 2000 to 2004, I was director of the Development Office for Mission and Identity of the Society of the Divine Word Missionaries at Fu Jen. In the time of turbulent time of integration process of Fu Jen. It was really a challenging task. Here the historical connection of Fu Jen Catholic University, re-founded in 1961 in Taiwan, with the Fu Jen Catholic University of Peking which from 1933 to 1951 was run by the Divine Word Missionaries was my main concern, i.e., to preserve the continuity of the timeline – past, present, and future. Existentially speaking, we individuals in our human life come from the past, go through the present, and go into the future.⁶⁴ A religious community can analogically perceive the responsibility and task in accordance with this timeline.

Other important aspects of my mission at Fu Jen were concern about the values of human dignity, meaning of life, religious inspiration for academic research, and – of course – fostering

⁶⁴ May 1953, p. 227. “The first thing necessary for a constructive dealing with time is to learn to live in the reality of the present moment. For psychologically speaking, this present moment is all we have. The past and future have meaning because they are part of the present: a past event has existence now because you are thinking of it at this present moment, or because it influences you so that you, as a living being in the present, are that much different. The future has reality because one can bring it into his mind in the present. Past was the present at one time, and the future will be the present at some coming moment. To try to live in the “when” of the future or the “then” of the past always involves an artificiality, a separating one's self from reality; for in actuality one exists in the present. The past has meaning as it lights up the present, and the future as it makes the present richer and more profound.”

the spirit of service among both teachers and students. A very important task was for us to gather respective materials in book form according to the Fu Jen educational motto: Truth, Goodness, Beauty, and Sanctity.

Furthermore, a year and a half, I was also Coordinator for Professional Ethics at Fu Jen. It was a continuous struggle and search for “burning hearts” among university teachers to prepare adequate materials for Fu Jen students in order with the help of them to raise students’ moral awareness as the ability to detect and appreciate the ethical aspects of decisions in life and profession that one must continuously make.

Personally, I am convinced that my most successful and greatest contribution at Fu Jen was my work within the goal of the dialogue with cultures. On August 1, 2002 Fu Jen Catholic University and the Institute Monumenta Serica founded together at the College of Foreign Languages and Literature the “Monumenta Serica Sinological Research Center.” This establishment had its historical meaning and marked anew an intimate relationship between the Institute Monumenta Serica, run by the Society of the Divine Word and with the headquarters Sankt Augustin (Germany), where I work now, and Fu Jen Catholic University. This cooperation has helped the university to achieve its goals, serving to facilitate cultural exchange between China and the West and further the dialogue and mutual growth of Chinese culture and Christian faith. From 2002 to 2012, i.e., during 10 years when I was director of the Monumenta Serica Sinological Research Center⁶⁵ at Fu Jen Catholic University, we were able to organize many academic activities. And this development has been continued by my successor – Dr. Sonia Huang Meiting 皇漢婷. With the help of Western Sinology, understood originally and classically as “Chinese philology,” i.e., the knowledge of China obtained through Chinese language and literature, we could organize seven international symposia. I was able to edit 10 volumes of the

⁶⁵ Its specific six goals are as follows: 1. to advance the exchange between Chinese and Western cultures; 2. to raise the level of knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Chinese culture in the West; 3. to strengthen cooperation with Taiwanese scholars in Chinese studies and to introduce to the Taiwanese academic world the results of the current Western sinological research; 4. to support a dialogue and mutual growth of Chinese culture and Christian faith; 5. in cooperation with the six departments and three graduate institutes of the College of Foreign Languages and Literature as well as with other academic institutions at Fu Jen Catholic University to strengthen and promote sinological research at Fu Jen Catholic University; 6. to strengthen the cooperation between the Monumenta Serica Institute, run by the Society of the Divine Word, with Fu Jen Catholic University re-founded in Taiwan, and thus to renew their historical ties.

Fu Jen Daxue Huayixuezhì congshu xilie⁶⁶ (Fu Jen University Monumenta Serica Monograph Series).

Thus, Fu Jen Catholic University became for me during 13 years there (1999-2012) a place where I as Divine Word missionary and Catholic priest could wholeheartedly serve Taiwanese students. My stay and work at Fu Jen I understand as the most challenging and strenuous period in my life. But it was also most rewarding! Not only the past of Fu Jen touched my heart, but also its present and future is of my concern! Fu Jen is a Catholic university, although at present almost 92% of our students are non-Christians (around 7 % Protestant and over 1% Catholic students!) It is a Catholic university, although nearly 2/3 of the cadre of our university teachers is also non-Christian. As any other university in the world, Fu Jen is an academic community of students and teachers. Its special character is the fact that it is closely associated in

⁶⁶ 《輔仁大學華裔學志叢書系列》書名表: 1. (Zbigniew Wesolowski 魏思齊: 編輯), 《有關中國學術性的對話: 以〈華裔學志〉為例、民國九十二年九月二十六日、二十七日、論文集》, 台北縣新莊市: 輔仁大學出版社、2004年。2. (Zbigniew Wesolowski 魏思齊: 編輯), 《Monumenta Serica. Journal of Oriental Studies: 〈華裔學志〉中譯標題目錄 (A Catalogue of Titles and Contents of Monumenta Serica. Journal of Oriental Studies: Volumes 1-50 [1935-2002] with Chinese Translation)》台北縣新莊市: 輔仁大學出版社、2004年。3. (林志明/Zbigniew Wesolowski 魏思齊: 編輯), 《輔仁大學第二屆漢學國際研討會「其言曲而中: 漢學作為對西方的新全釋—法國的貢獻」(民國九十三年十一月五、六日[星期五、六])論文集/Actes du colloque: Deuxième Colloque international de Sinologie de l'Université Fu Jen Le detour et l'accès: la sinologie en tant que nouvelle herméneutique pour l'Occident – la contribution française (Vendredi 5 et Samedi 6 novembre 2004)》, 台北縣新莊市: 輔仁大學出版社、2005年。4. (Zbigniew Wesolowski 魏思齊: 編輯), 《輔仁大學第三屆漢學國際研討會「位格和個人概念在中國與西方: Rolf Trauzettel 教授周圍的波恩漢學學派」(民國九十四年十一月二十五、二十六日[星期五、六])論文集/Symposiums-Beiträge: Drittes Internationales Sinologisches Symposium der Katholischen Fu Jen Universität: Personen- und Individuumsbegriff in China und im Westen – Der Beitrag der Bonner Sinologischen Schule um Professor Rolf Trauzettel》, 台北縣新莊市: 輔仁大學出版社、2006年。5. (Zbigniew Wesolowski 魏思齊: 編輯), 《輔仁大學第四屆漢學國際研討會—「中國宗教研究: 現況與展望」論文集/The Forth Fu Jen University International Sinological Symposium: Research on Religions in China: Status quo and Perspectives; Symposium Papers》, 台北縣新莊市: 輔大出版社、2007年。6. (Zbigniew Wesolowski 魏思齊: 編輯), 《「華裔學志」中譯論文精選: 文化交流和中國基督宗教史研究/A Selection of Monumenta Serica Articles Translated into Chinese: Cultural Exchange and Research on the History of Christianity in China》, 台北縣新莊市: 輔大出版社、2009年4月。7. (Antonella Tulli 圖莉/Zbigniew Wesolowski 魏思齊), 《輔仁大學第五屆漢學國際研討會「義大利與中國相遇: 義大利漢學研究的貢獻」論文集/Quinto Simposio Internazionale di Sinologia Dell'Università Fu Jen: "L'incontro fra l'Italia e la Cina: il contributo italiano alla sinologia"》, 台北縣新莊市: 輔大出版社、2009年5月。8. (Zbigniew Wesolowski 魏思齊: 編輯), 《以漢學為中西文化之橋樑: 華裔學志漢學研究中心專題演講選集》/Sinology as a Bridge between Chinese and Western Cultures: A Selection of Special Lectures of the Monumenta Serica Sinological Research Center, 台北縣新莊市: 輔大出版社、2010年。9. (Zbigniew Wesolowski 魏思齊: 編輯)《根據〈華裔學志〉認識西方漢學家》/Meeting Western Sinologists through the Monumenta Serica, 台北縣新莊市: 輔大出版社、2011年。10. (Zbigniew Wesolowski 魏思齊: 編輯)《輔仁大學第六屆漢學國際研討會: 「西方早期(1552/1814年間)漢語學習和研究」論文集》/The Sixth Fu Jen University International Sinological Symposium: „Early European (1552-1814) Acquisition and Research on Chinese Languages. Symposium Papers, 台北縣新莊市: 輔大出版社、2011年。

fostering the growth of the whole person, on the basis of Truth, Goodness, Beauty, and Holiness. Fu Jen is committed to a dialogue leading to the integration of Chinese culture and Christian faith; to academic research and the promotion of genuine knowledge; to the development of society and the advancement of humankind.

In the meantime, Fu Jen Catholic University includes 11 colleges (Liberal Arts, Education, Communication, Arts, Medicine, Science and Engineering, Foreign Languages, Human Ecology, Law, Management, Social Sciences), offering 48 undergraduate programs, 47 master's programs and 11 doctoral programs. Fu Jen has about 26,000 students and over 160 student associations and clubs. There are also around 2,000 international students at Fu Jen. Fu Jen has established partnership with more than 300 universities worldwide, promoting international academic cooperation and activities, such as exchange programs, dual degree programs and the program of "International Faculty and Student Teaching and Learning."

What are the greatest challenges to Fu Jen Catholic University? To keep its Catholic character, it has been and will be its greatest challenge! (Please see "Addendum: An Email (from 7 April 2018) of Fr. Leszek Niewdana SVD (Nie Da'an 聶達安 – Vice-president for Mission on the Present-day and Future Challenges and Strengths of Fu Jen Catholic University" at the end of this contribution). There are fewer and fewer religious sisters and brothers, and priests who work at Fu Jen campus! There seem to be fewer and fewer Christian university teachers at Fu Jen whose hearts are burning for Jesus Christ! There are also other dangers which have to be faced in the future, like sub-replacement fertility (*shaozihua* 少子化) and the rapid growth of higher education and competition among universities in Taiwan. There have always been financial and personnel issues. In the future, there will be some global challenges. As Nathan Harden says:

*In the future, the primary platform for higher education may be a third-party website, not the university itself. What is emerging is a global marketplace where courses from numerous universities are available on a single website. Students can pick and choose the best offerings from each school; the university simply uploads the content.*⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Harden 2012: <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2012/12/11/the-end-of-the-university-as-we-know-it/> (retrieved 5 April 2018).

Conclusion: What Can Fu Jen Catholic University Learn from Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis gaudium* (signed December 8, 2017)

The Catholic Church is also very well aware of the present-day metamorphosis of the world⁶⁸ and its challenges. In his new 87-page Apostolic Constitution on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties – *Gaudium veritatis*⁶⁹ (The Joy of Truth) signed December 8, 2017, and published January 29, 2018), Pope Francis desires to promote the renewal of Catholic higher studies. This recent document deals specifically with ecclesiastical universities and faculties, which – in contrast to regular Catholic universities like Fu Jen Catholic University – offer Vatican-approved degrees required to teach in seminaries or at pontifical universities. Thus, John Paul II’s 1990 apostolic constitution *EcE* is not affected, as it deals specifically with Catholic colleges and universities, rather than ecclesiastical academic entities. However, there are many general thoughts in the “Foreword” of *Gaudium Veritatis* which are worthwhile to ponder over. Let us begin with a vision of Catholic universities as universities in service of a missionary Church:

The primary need today is for the whole People of God to be ready to embark upon a new stage of “Spirit-filled” evangelization. This calls for “a resolute process of discernment, purification and reform”. In this process, a fitting renewal of the system of ecclesiastical studies plays a strategic role (Gaudium Veritatis, “Foreword” 3).

Another thought in the “Foreword” (3) of *Gaudium Veritatis* aims at a “cultural revolution” in the light of Church tradition:

This vast and pressing task requires, on the cultural level of academic training and scientific study, a broad and generous effort at a radical paradigm shift, or rather – dare I say – at “a bold cultural revolution” [Laudato Si, 114]. In this effort, the worldwide network of ecclesiastical universities and faculties is called to offer the decisive contribution of leaven, salt and light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the living Tradition of the Church, which is ever open to new situations and ideas.

⁶⁸ Written in conscious allusion to Ulrich Beck’s book *The Metamorphosis of the World* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2016).

⁶⁹ The text of *Veritatis gaudium* is available on the Vatican website: https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_constitutions/documents/papa-francesco_costituzione-ap_20171208_veritatis-gaudium.html (retrieved 5 April 2018).

Pope Francis points out in the “Foreword” (4) of *Gaudium Veritatis* four “fundamental criteria” for the renewal and revival of the contribution ecclesiastical studies can make for a missionary Church. In view of Fu Jen Catholic University, I especially think of Fu Jen Academia Catholica, Christian university teachers at the Center for Holistic Education, and those involved in the work for Catholic character at the university:

First, the most urgent and enduring criterion is that of contemplation and the presentation of a spiritual, intellectual and existential introduction to the heart of the kerygma, namely the ever fresh and attractive good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which continues to take flesh in the life of the Church and of humanity (Gaudium Veritatis, “Foreword” 4).

This attitude is tantamount to discovering God in every human person in his/her social context of life, because “[f]or ‘God, in Christ, redeems not only the individual person but also the social relations existing between men’” (*ibid.*).

*A second guiding criterion, closely linked to and flowing from the first, is that of wide-ranging dialogue, not as a mere tactical approach, but as an intrinsic requirement for experiencing in community the joy of the Truth and appreciating more fully its meaning and practical implications. Today our proclamation of the Gospel and the Church’s doctrine are called to promote a culture of encounter, in generous and open cooperation with all the positive forces that contribute to the growth of universal human consciousness. A culture, we might say, of encounter between all the authentic and vital cultures, thanks to a reciprocal exchange of the gifts of each in that luminous space opened up by God’s love for all his creatures (*ibid.*).*

*From this follows the third fundamental criterion that I would propose: inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary approaches carried out with wisdom and creativity in the light of Revelation. What distinguishes the academic, formative and research approach of the system of ecclesiastical studies, on the level of both content and method, is the vital intellectual principle of the unity in difference of knowledge and respect for its multiple, correlated and convergent expressions (*ibid.*).*

This third fundamental criterion, which I want to call a Christian⁷⁰ search for unity of knowledge in the face of an uncertain and fragmented pluralism, is a very important ideal in Western world. The idea of the deep unity of all knowledge seems, in view of constantly increasing academic specialization, to be a regulative idea in Kantian perspective.⁷¹

A fourth and final criterion concerns the urgent need for “networking” between those institutions worldwide that cultivate and promote ecclesiastical studies, in order to set up suitable channels of cooperation also with academic institutions in the different countries and with those inspired by different cultural and religious traditions. At the same time, specialized centres of research need to be established in order to study the epochal issues affecting humanity today and to offer appropriate and realistic paths for their resolution.

To conclude, I want to stress that the recent Apostolic Constitution on Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties – *Gaudium veritatis* takes a bold intellectual Catholic stance which should empower the Church through her higher education and studies to answer anew and adequately the most basic truths of human existence in front of an increasingly secularized society in the world. Of course, here is also meant the present and future role of Fu Jen Catholic University in Taiwan!

Addendum: An Email (from 7 April 2018) of Fr. Leszek Niewdana SVD (Nie Da’an 聶達安 – Vice-president for Mission on the Present-day and Future Challenges and Strengths of Fu Jen Catholic University

1. Present-day and future biggest challenges for Fu Jen Catholic University:

- a. Low birth rate (one of the lowest in the world): This means that the potential pool of students is rapidly diminishing. By 2028 the potential pool of university students for the entire Taiwan will be half of that a few years ago. At the same time the number of universities has hardly shrunk (up to now only a few of them were closed down, basically by merging them with other universities). For the time being, Fu Jen as one of the top private universities is still able to attract a relatively sufficient number of undergraduate students, though in the near future several departments might face difficulties to find sufficient number of students. Facing a tremendous pressure, Fu Jen

⁷⁰ For naturalist search of this ideal see the 1998 book *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge* (New York: Vintage Books) by biologist Edward O. Wilson (b. 1929), in which he discusses methods that have been used to unite the sciences and might in the future unite them with the humanities. Wilson uses the concept *consilience* to describe the synthesis of knowledge from different specialized fields of human research.

⁷¹ For Kant there were three such regulative ideas as the postulates of practical reason, i.e., “God, freedom, and immortality” (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A3/B7).

decided to gradually close down philosophy, religious studies and one class of each economics and Chinese literature (the latter two have had double classes) at the Evening School. At the same time Fu Jen also decided to open new programs (again at the Evening School) which it is hoped will be more attractive in terms of the profile of studies [This is more of a test to see if the Evening School could become more oriented at job training and skills improving; some universities already completely closed the evening divisions].

- b. In the past Fu Jen expanded immensely (Fu Jen has become the second biggest university in Taiwan in terms of the student population after Tai Da), including new colleges, new buildings, and hospital ... Now it is in need of far better horizontal integration, particularly after opening of the hospital. At the same time, keeping healthy finances will be a long term challenge, especially if the hospital loses money for too long.
- c. Since now almost anybody can get to university, the quality of education (outcome) suffers severely.
- d. Entire Taiwan also faces huge challenges to find sufficient number of postgraduate students, especially for MA. Even mighty Taiwan National University is not immune to this trend. This is also, at least partly, the reason why its international rankings are sliding down as the Ministry of Education slashed the quotas for PhD programs at all universities. As for Fu Jen, at least some of our MA programs will have to go. This is why we need to develop more international MA programs (in English) to attract international students.
- e. Several years ago we put a lot of hope in students coming from Mainland China. Fu Jen is among the universities that attract most such students (right now there are about 600 of them, including postgraduate students, studying at Fu Jen). However, this hope is gradually fading away as the numbers are falling, mainly due to controls, i.e., political reasons, on both sides.
- f. Another challenge: "Student brain drain." Universities across Asia (some countries face similar problem of low birth rates as Taiwan), including Mainland China, are now heavily targeting students from Taiwan. We are afraid that more local students will go overseas, which coupled with a very low birth rates becomes a tremendous challenge.
- g. A heavy control by Ministry of Education: One of the key issues is increase in tuition fees. For over eight years we were not allowed to increase tuition fees, but at the same time

had to (forced legally) increase payments to different groups working at the university. This tremendously increases our financial pressure.

2. As for Fu Jen strengths:

- a. Fu Jen still has a very good reputation, particularly in the private sector of the economy.
- b. We are still able to attract a relatively good number of regular students from outside of Taiwan (over 600 from Mainland China, about 600 other overseas Chinese, and about 250 other foreign students), as well as for exchanges and Chinese language studies, which helps us to keep the reputation as having a relatively international campus. Planned increase of programs in English, if successful, could even further strengthen such reputation.
- c. We have built a strong network of support from the alumni (fundraising, government subsidies and other sources of income helped us to reduce our reliance on student fees to about 60 percent, meaning that in our annual budget student fees cover just above 60 percent of total expenses).
- d. One campus, about 4,500 dormitory beds (and still expanding), good sports facilities, including renewed football stadium, good transportation infrastructure, including metro station.
- e. We are practically the only private general education university (*zonghe daxue* 綜合大學) which has a hospital. As our hospital has only started, we are losing quite a lot of money, but we hope in several years' time the trend will change, which could mean that basically very few private and public universities could really compete with us. The better we can administratively connect the hospital with the university the bigger advantage for us.

3. Challenges to Fu Jen's Catholic character:

- a. Rapidly shrinking numbers of priests, nuns and dedicated Catholics. Right now we have only (if I am not mistaken) 13 priests, 1 brother and 3 nuns working full time at Fu Jen. After several years, there will be no full time nun working at Fu Fen (except perhaps at the hospital), and no full time Jesuit, which gradually might pose a huge challenge to the function of what we still call "founding sections." Beginning next academic year, there will be no nuns serving in the dormitories.
- b. The few priests with PhDs who still show some interest in working at Fu Jen get their degrees mainly in the areas of theology, philosophy eventually religious studies, and thus are unable to get into vast majority of the departments. At the same time the quotas at the Holistic Education Center (through which most of us now get into the system) are

also very limited (put simply, the religious compete with their own for a limited number of places at the Holistic Education Center).

- c. Relatively weak ability of our religious coordinators (though there are exceptions) to reach out to students and teachers.
- d. Limitations (including legal ones, as well as protests of social activists) with regard to teaching about Catholicism and/or Catholic stance on some issues (e.g. gay marriage, transgenderism, abortion).

4. Elements that help to retain Fu Jen's Catholic character:

- a. Strong support of Fu Jen's mission by the Board of Trustees.
- b. Academia Catholica and Yu-bin Fund which support various research and other projects promoting Catholicism.
- c. Still relatively strong support of Fu Jen's mission by many teachers, but it is difficult to say about the younger ones as we have less and less influence over the hiring of teachers.
- d. Strong support of Fu Jen's Christian character by the Protestants; this is true about the teachers, students (at present, 7 percent of our student population are Protestants; Catholics are only between 1 and 1.5 percent, which has not changed for a few decades) and some of the Protestant pastors (communities); by contrast, very few Catholic priests will encourage young people to go to study at Fu Jen.
- e. Community (social) engagement programs: service learning, including overseas (*vide* Fuwu xuexi zhongxin 服務學習中心), tutoring children in remote areas over the internet (*vide* Taiwan pianxiang jiaoyu guanhuai zhongxin 台灣偏鄉教育關懷中心), strong support for a growing number of indigenous students (over 500 of them). Fu Jen is now considered as providing one of the best cares for indigenous students (*vide* Yuanzhuminzu xuesheng ziyuan zhongxin 原住民族學生資源中心).

Holistic education, particularly core courses (Introduction to University Life, Philosophy of Life and Professional Ethics, which at least provide a platform to present Fu Jen's Catholic character. Our Professional Ethics as an obligatory course for all undergraduate and some MA students is very unique in Taiwan.

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