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THE STAND CATHOLIC UNIVERSITIES

The times indeed are tough for Catholic universities, indeed even all Christian schools of any denomination. But for Catholics, university life tends to water down Catholicism, its dogma and teachings, even in some instances to do away with it. Many professors who are Catholic go out of their way to avoid the injection of Catholic dogma and teachings into the classroom, or even the university life generally. Lay teachers abound. Many such universities have secularists or non-Catholics who teach. They have no regard for Catholicism as such. Many of the teachings of the Catholic Church are openly defied, even mocked. Traditional positions on social and moral issues long held by the Catholic Church are regarded as archaic, biased and in many cases just plain wrong.

Pennsylvania Republican Senator, Rick Santorum, is a Roman Catholic by faith. Santorum, as a Catholic, expressed his views regarding homosexuality. His statements were misquoted and taken out of context by the liberal media, which seized upon any words, or the implications of those words to attack a conservative, Catholic Senator who would even dare to appose anything homosexual. Santorum was the commencement speaker at St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. St. Joseph's University is an old, respected Philadelphia educational institution, strongly Catholic (or at least it was) and proud of its moral stand. Many faculty and students protested and demanded that the invitation to speak at commencement be rescinded because of what Santorum said. The University persisted, Santorum spoke, and any number of faculty and students heckled Santorum, and then impolitely walked out in the middle of the speech. The University defended the choice of Santorum who did or said nothing contrary to Catholic dogma or teaching. What was shocking was that so many faculty members of a Catholic university and students trained by that University disagreed with Santorum, and St. Joseph University, and the Catholic Church and walked out in protest. It is shocking that a Catholic university would hire and support professors who were so anti-Catholic in their thinking. It was equally shocking that so many students, presumably Catholic, who would go to St. Joseph's at least in part for a Catholic education, protested the teachings of the church, substituted their own thinking, values and morals and defied the very church which had provided them the education they sought.

Georgetown University is another Catholic educational institution. It was founded and is run by the Jesuits. It is a quality school, one which provides excellent education in a Catholic environment. The commencement speaker this year was Nigerian Cardinal, Francis Arinze. Cardinal Arinze is a strong, conservative Catholic who dared to say the following:

“The family is under siege because of an anti-life mentality as is seen in abortion, infanticide and Euthanasia. It is scorned and banalized by pornography, desecrated by fornication and adultery, mocked by homosexuality, sabotaged by irregular unions and cut in two by divorce.”

In short, the good cardinal summarized traditional Catholic teaching on the family at a Catholic university. Well and good, you say? Not at Georgetown. Certain members of the Georgetown faculty walked out of the speech. Certain student groups on campus were outraged and they are demanding that the cardinal and the university apologize. These liberal faculty members and students, dare we say anti-Catholic as well, could care less about the teachings, traditions, morals and values of the Catholic Church and are demanding not merely an apology, but really fundamental change in Catholic teaching and positions regarding the family, abortion, marriage and divorce, fornication and adultery, and of course homosexuality. How absurd! Would that the Catholic Church, Catholic hierarchy had the courage to fire such faculty and expel such students. None of them belong at a Catholic university. Let them go elsewhere where they can do their own thing. Believe as they wish, teach as they will, in an educational environment conducive to all such things. They do not belong at a Catholic university.

Perhaps the Church will recognize these incidents as a wake up call. It is a time for courage, not compromise. It is a time to reinforce, restate and recommit to traditional, moral values and standards and to rid the chicken coop of the foxes. It seems so difficult for religious institutions to act courageously today. It is so easy to back down, or compromise or go even more silently about their business. But there will be no Christian universities or educational institutions in the future, Catholic or Protestant, unless they stand up for what is right, and for what they believe. Georgetown, St. Joseph's and other such institutions need a cleansing, a rebirth, a restatement of priorities and values. And quickly! Lest the secularists and anti-Catholics continue to corrupt or, God forbid, take over!