Summary of the February 17, 2010 session of the Religious Life Review
“Catholic Students' Religious Life Activities, Needs, and Concerns”

Michael Cartwright welcomed everyone with a brief overview of the year-long effort to review where we are and where we’ve been with religious life on campus. The review continues with a discussion of the needs of adult students on March 3rd, on March 17th Kory Vitangeli and Terry Schindler will talk about their findings from student-focused groups, and on March 31 there will be a wrap-up session of the year-long review process.

Beth Kiggins & Julie Gahimer co-lead the Catholic Student Association on campus. They provided a Powerpoint presentation to help with the discussion of Catholic students’ religious life activities, needs and concerns. The first part of the session focused on 3 questions.

1. Where we’ve been?

   Fr. Don Quinn served UIndy for 20 + years
   Weekly mass on at 12:10 in chapel
   Full-time Benedictine nun for 6 years
   Catholic Student Association has been around for the last 5-6 years

2. What do we recall?

   Responses from those present included:

   • Cartwright stated Lynn Youngblood’s mother’s roommate in 1938 married a Catholic and it was a notable event for a protestant to marry a Catholic, so we know that Catholics have been on campus since the mid-30’s.

   • Kiggins asked if there is any truth to the rumor that Catholics were locked in the library. Cartwright offered his knowledge is that if it did happen it took place in Good Hall and the nuns on campus in the 60’s do not recall that it ever happened.

   • The earliest masses on campus happened during World War II. President Good requested mass be held on campus for the soldiers according to Cartwright.

   • Gabonay recalls that in modern times John Young and Fr. Don conducted a joint ecumenical Sunday morning service during welcome week.

   • Gahimer talked about coming to Sunday night mass in the 90’s at 9 pm on campus and that many of the graduate students came to that mass.
• Kiggins recalled Fr. Don bringing Matthew Kelly and Jane Rider to campus and the large number of participants at these events.

• Lang Brownlee talked about the REL 100 Christianity course designed by Cartwright in the 90’s that include introduction to Catholicism. Protestants had very little knowledge of Catholicism. EIP has tried on several occasions to bring Catholics and Protestants together even a program titled “Catholics & Protestants Eating Together” was created but this program was short lived.

3. Where we are now?

• 25% of the student population at UIndy is Catholic (Cartwright said 65% of students give religious information upon entering college, so 1 out of 4 students who reported religious affiliation is a member of RCC.)
• Partnership with Good Shepherd-Dave Wilson, Parish Life Coordinator
• Young Adult Mass Sunday at St. Johns
• Chaplains serve pastoral needs
• Programming of Catholic Student Association
• Bi-weekly evening weekday mass in chapel

Cartwright asked, “Do we know how many Catholic students are commuters or commute on weekends?” Perry Herron said there are a lot of Roncolli students here. Gahimer stated it was important to her to have mass on campus when she was going to school.

Christy Michel has about 120 Catholics on an e-mail list that she uses to send out messages about Catholic events.

The mass at St. Johns Catholic Church (downtown Indy) seems to have undermined the attendance at Good Shepherd for their Sunday am service. Gahimer said the service at St. John had so many students from IUPUI, Butler and UIndy that it was hard to have any sense of community. Jeremiah Gibbs has noticed that Dave Wilson used to be here all the time but has slowly receded from being involved on campus. Gabonay mentioned that it might be because leadership changed for CSA and that could be part of the deluded allegiance to Good Shepherd.

Cartwright asked if there is an attendance pattern for mass. When he attended one week in 2003-2004 there were 9 people, another time around 40 and has been told at times there are above 80. Kiggins said that at last Wednesday’s mass there were around a dozen participants. Fr. Mathias is looking for 75 to attend the Ash Wednesday service. Brownlee stated that the numbers for Sunday Mass used to be consistently high when Fr. Don was on campus. Fr. Don was very aggressive in getting students to attend mass. Fr. Don gave students tangible items. Cindy Steinmetz added that during Lent there used to be a lot of literature and speakers available on campus. Kiggins said that the students seem to be in touch with Fr. Mathias who is the chaplain for Our Lady of Grace Monastery and offers mass on campus every other week.
CSA lost a lot of good student leaders this past year. Two sophomores are leading the group now and the co-faculty leaders are also new to CSA this year.

Brownlee said that Catholics on campus came to see Sr. Jennifer and that the chaplains can’t take care of some of the issues that Sr. Jennifer dealt with when she was a chaplain.

4. Ecumenical Ministries—Protestant/Catholic Collaborations
   - Live in Christian community
   - Honors particularly of diverse traditions
   - Share committed life together based on common disciple practices
   - Catholic/Protestant relations
   - Taizè weekly prayer on campus
   - Taizè spring term trip

Brownlee and Christy Michel talked about their time at Taizè of how Protestants and Catholics can live together and appreciate one another’s beliefs.

Christy Michel says that they meet to car pool to St. John’s and to Good Shepherd, they have “faith sharing” sessions every other Wednesday and mass on campus every other Wednesday.

Gibbs said that the CVOC curriculum is one third to one half based on Roman Catholic tradition but very few students are Roman Catholic and in fact none are in the program this year. Gibbs plans to make a concerted effort to draw Catholic students into CVOC next year.

Cartwright added that there have been many fledgling attempts to partner with the Archdiocese such as the Summer Youth Academy and in relations to the Lantz Center. The Crossings Project set aside money for Catholic students to do service projects such as ASP (this was before Greyhound Adventure Grants) and Fr. Don never used the money. He always seemed to have the money to help the students.

Brownlee stated that Catholic students participate in the Threshold retreat for freshman students at the beginning of their college career and Catholic students are given the opportunity to attend Catholic mass on Saturday evening. The Allelon House, an intentional Christian community that lasted for three years on campus, had both Protestant and Catholics living together.

5. Student Needs—How are we serving the needs of our students?

Perry Herron wasn’t aware of student Catholic programming on campus. She suggested that a morning mass might bring faculty/staff but Gibbs replied that students wouldn’t make a morning mass and that we have to make a concerted effort to have programming for residential students. Christy Michel said that campus housing is
overflowing and students are being turned away. Vitangeli said there are 1300 on campus and UIndy is becoming 50/50 residential. Students like the convenience of campus living especially with the new dorm that offers single rooms.

Vitangeli asked, “how do we engage the other 60-70% of students?”

Kiggins stated that the college years are when individuals turn away from their Catholic faith.

Michels talked about the new hounds website for high school seniors and that the largest number of students talking on this website are Catholic.

Cartwright talked about Fr. Don and John Young being denominationally-sponsored chaplaincy. All denominationally-sponsored chaplaincies have dissolved or down-sized to smaller responsibility.

Who is responsible for mass? Not sure university will ever be responsible for this. What model would fit here?

6. Programming—What types of activities would you like to see? What should we be doing?

Gahimer would like to see the Catholic Church offers a ministry on campus and she thinks it is being discussed by the Archdiocese.

Cartwright stated that Catholics have come along with us to make ecumenical programming on campus. Taizè offers a rich sense of Catholic/Protestant unity. It is tricky to name how to do something for the common good. It is not a natural collaboration between the university and the archdiocese.

Gahimer told about the conversation she overheard where an administrative assistant said “I think this place used to be Methodist but I’m not sure.” How do we get the message out?