

The Seminar

Since 2009, the Mount has maintained an annual faculty development seminar on the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. Each year, a cohort of faculty participate in a weekly seminar with readings and discussions to cultivate a deeper understanding of the relation between our Catholic and academic mission.

Rationale

The Catholic tradition is a rich source of intellectual vitality, relevant across the disciplines and especially relevant to our liberal arts mission. In their book *Catholic Higher Education: A Culture in Crisis*, Melanie M. Morey and Fr. John J. Piderit identify faculty formation as one of the most urgent needs at most Catholic universities, and they recommend that attention to this formation not be regarded as a matter of individual spirituality, but as the cultivation of an intellectual community (pp. 111, 226-7, 311, 352). The responsibility of faculty to bear and maintain the religious mission of a Catholic university is a central theme of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*.

The seminar gives Mount faculty a specific opportunity for formation in the Catholic intellectual tradition. Over the course of the year, participants learn more about the Catholic intellectual tradition in general, discuss how this tradition is relevant to liberal education and to particular academic disciplines, and reflect on how their vocations as scholars and teachers connects with our Catholic mission.

Program Details

The seminar is led by a faculty member well-versed in the Catholic intellectual tradition and broadly familiar with the liberal arts disciplines; individual discussions are sometimes led by other guest faculty.

There are usually 6 to 8 participants. When possible, these are usually faculty in their 2nd, 3rd, or 4th year towards tenure, although some years it is opened up to other faculty.

The seminar meets once a week for 90 minutes, with particular readings assigned for discussion each meeting.

All books and other reading materials are provided to the participants, and participants count participation in the seminar as part of their teaching load for the year.

Readings are chosen to cover four main themes: the idea of liberal education, the idea of a Catholic university, the Catholic intellectual tradition in general, how that tradition is relevant to particular disciplines.

Benefits of this program: In addition to meeting the described need for faculty formation in the Catholic intellectual tradition, this particular proposal has several benefits:

- Weekly meetings build personal relationships and community.
- The seminar format fosters ongoing reflection, dialogue, and intellectual transformation.
- Faculty participants feel better prepared to contribute to the university's mission.
- Seminar participation is integrated with other orientation efforts and with the formative pre-tenure review process.
- The program supports our primary mission, and addresses a general need in Catholic higher education around the country.