

## From the Editor

The theme “charism and hospitality,” which the Boston College Roundtable began discussing with Aurelie Hagstrom’s paper and Marc Muskavitch’s response (*Integritas* 1.1, Spring 2013), elicited reflection on both the history of Catholic higher education and the frontiers that it faces in the twenty-first century. In this second issue from that gathering, Paul Mariani asks us to dwell for a moment on what made the formative experience at a Catholic college in the mid-twentieth century so powerful. His answer, in a word, is great literature.

Mariani reminds us, in a manner that follows John Henry Newman in *The Idea of a University*, that great literature is great not only because it is eloquent, but also because it draws the beholder into contemplation of what is good, true, and beautiful. Education in literature and the arts, by extension, serves to cultivate a desire for beauty so that a person will recognize it in the words of the poet, the brushstrokes of the painter, or the phrases of a great composer. Mariani’s essay below is a meditation on his own formation in appreciation of beauty, and his desire to broker that work of formation with his students.

Thomas G. Plante’s response to Mariani focuses on the formative experience that Mariani narrates in his paper. Plante, a psychologist, is interested in questions of how to share such a formative experience with students, given the parameters within which university professors today do their work. On the one hand, he notes, we want to help our students develop as persons; on the other hand, we are training them for professions. We want to show that it is possible to live as persons of faith while at the same time engaging in the highest levels of academic and professional activity. We want to cultivate imagination, but also help them to understand the concrete world in which they will live after they graduate. His question is how to find the right balance, while at the same time being motivated by love.

The fruitful discussion that followed Mariani’s and Plante’s papers elicited a great deal of appreciation for the opportunity to dwell in the richness of the Catholic literary imagination. Many agreed that the tradition did not receive sufficient attention or emphasis in our curricula, particularly in light of the fact that it has shaped later elements of Western culture up to the present day. Perhaps offering students the gift of such beautiful imagination can help transform a world often beset by ugliness.

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