

From the Editor

Our third volume of *Integritas* reflects conversations about science and the person at the Spring 2014 Boston College Roundtable. What is significant about this Issue 2 is the fact that it highlights not only the topic itself but also the conversation partners. Thomas Plante observes this in his response to John Cunningham's essay: who he is—a Jesuit priest and a researcher in particle physics—is important.

Cunningham's paper offers a brief history of Catholic views on scientific thought, pointing out both positive and negative responses. While the contributions of many Catholic thinkers to that history is indisputable, still the Church—and Catholic universities of the past two centuries—have been slow to reap the benefits of a robust commitment to scientific inquiry. Today, that early reticence means that Catholic colleges and universities in the United States face an uphill climb if they seek to compete for grant moneys and researchers committed to cutting-edge science. On the other hand, these institutions are in the right position to place commitment to science against the backdrop of a commitment to the person, as explored through studies in the liberal arts. The way forward, Cunningham proposes, is to embrace both positive contributions to science from the Church's history—its scientists and its world-embracing theology—and this larger commitment to the human good.

In response, Plante highlights the critical importance of people like Cunningham, who embody a commitment to science within the more fundamental commitment to the life of Catholic faith. More than any abstract argument, Plante avers, a person who lives a vowed religious life while working to answer basic questions about the building-blocks of the physical universe manifests a vibrant dual commitment to good science and authentic faith.

During the conversation that followed these papers, Roundtable participants raised questions about the practical and philosophical challenges facing institutions that seek to promote the sciences. Observing the daunting costs, some wondered whether in this age of technology it is possible to consider a collaborative effort among Catholic institutions, especially in training scientists committed to raising difficult moral questions with their peers in the liberal arts.

Timothy P. Muldoon
muldoont@bc.edu