Moral Choices Lecture
Introductory Remarks
President Tom Foley
Mount Aloysius College
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The biography in our programs is very true to the humble servant of God and Mercy from whom we are about to hear. It is modest to a fault, incomplete in the extreme, and our only excuse is that that is what our speaker sent us!! Let me add three notes to that program biography.

First, Sister Mary Ann Dillon is an accomplished academic, especially in the field framed by tonight’s topic. Her doctorate is in systematic theology from Duquesne, and her doctoral thesis explored the idea of the common good in the Catholic/Christian tradition.

Before coming to Mount Aloysius, she was Dean of General Education at Saint Francis University where she also served as assistant professor of philosophy and religious studies. There, she was a member of the Advisory Board of their Ethics Institute, developing and teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in health care ethics that were required of all undergraduates in the nursing, physician assistant, physical therapy and occupational therapy programs.

Sr. Mary Ann currently serves as Senior Vice President of Mission and Sponsorship at Mercy Health System in southeastern Pennsylvania. In that capacity, she is responsible for clinical and organizational ethics education, programs and processes throughout the System, as well as for the development and implementation of formation programs for trustees, leadership team members and colleagues. Sister Mary Ann is certainly an intellectual leader on the very idea of the Common Good.

Second, Sister Mary Ann is also a very practical leader on the idea of 21st Century Citizenship. In a profound extension of Mercy ideals, Sister Mary Ann inaugurated the position of Vice-President for Mission Integration at Mount Aloysius, and recruited Sister Helen Marie Burns to fill it. This very lecture—now in its eighth year—is just one example of initiatives implemented during their time together at the College.

Sister Mary Ann, Helen Marie was an especially wise appointment—by my count, in addition to the Moral Choices series, she has organized 16 biannual ecumenical lectures, roughly 10 annual in-school retreats, 8 Mercy week lectures, 7 Summer Scripture Institutes and 2 Thomas Merton seminars. That’s all in addition to her day job, where she teaches, mentors (colleagues and staff members alike), tutors (Mercy Scholars, honors students and whoever comes to her door), and lastly keeps me in line—some days her toughest assignment.

Of course, at Mount Aloysius, this office for mission integration—designed by these two extraordinary women—helps oversee a wealth of activities that model and practice 21st century active-duty citizenship. Last year, our students volunteered almost 9,000 hours to work on 266 projects with 144 different community partners. So besides her credentials as a thought leader on the topic, she is a very practical leader as well.
Finally, a word about her service to this institution—which we might characterize as a best practice of “21st Century Citizenship: The Common Good.”

Mary Ann was at Mount Aloysius College for 13 years, and as every single trustee here with us tonight will tell you, she moved this College to an entirely new level during that time. During her Presidency, the College increased enrollment by 47 percent, quadrupled the number of residential students, tripled the number of baccalaureate programs, doubled the number of student activities and clubs, and managed the college’s transition to NCAA Division III athletics (and doubled that participation rate while she was at it).

In her spare time, Sister Mary Ann oversaw the introduction of the College’s first master’s degree programs, dramatically improved its financial position (Mount Aloysius is an S&P rated A- institution—a rating with which any of our competitors would be delighted), and brought us into the 21st century in technology in the classroom, for the faculty and in her administration.

Sister Mary Ann, working closely with Sister Ginny Bertchi, also engineered the formulation and execution of a transformational Campus Master Plan. During their tenure here together, and following that plan almost to the letter, these two Mercy dynamos oversaw

- the construction of two modern dormitories and a science classroom building
- a 40% expansion of Cosgrave
- the complete remodeling of the nursing wing
- the funding and the founding of all our nursing simulation labs
- the creation of the brick walkway which has done so much to unify the campus
- the general beautification of the grounds (including the brick-framed entrance to the college) and
- so many other improvements which today protect the many architectural highlights of Old Main while integrating the modern college campus that is Mount Aloysius today.

These two legendary leaders—who followed a litany of other names whose very histories rhyme with Mount Aloysius—also led the way to the first remodeling of Alumni Hall in almost 100 years, completed the college’s first comprehensive fundraising campaign to help support all this work, and left a legacy of dramatically expanded academic opportunities, institutionalized Mercy values and a campus footprint 41% larger than when they arrived. I am out of breath just describing all that work.

It is my honor to present to you a thought leader, a practical implementer and a walking best practice of 21st Century Citizenship: The Common Good, Sister Mary Ann Dillon.