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Forming Ethical Business Leaders

Cardinal Turkson

Ghanaian Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, told a gathering of deans of Catholic business schools that their mandate includes educating students “on the foundations for moral business decisions” and forming them “to lead an integrated life, not a life where one’s faith is kept separate.” The cardinal spoke March 31 at the Business Ethics Conference for Deans of Catholic Schools of Business at the University of St. Thomas in Houston. He said it is important that ethics is taught throughout the business school curriculum rather than simply in business ethics courses. “The undivided life where faith and work connect needs to be modeled and encouraged throughout the student’s experience,” the car-

“While specific business ethics courses are important, if ethics is not a topic throughout the curriculum, it has not truly been taught.”

dinal said. “Less than that might be education, but not formation.” Cardinal Turkson said students must be taught that ethical action is not “unusually courageous” nor are ethical business leaders “exceptional heroes.” In their future careers, students will surely face ethical challenges, the cardinal said, and Catholic business schools must equip them with the tools not only to recognize ethical problems but also to advocate for change, whatever the consequences may be. Cardinal Turkson’s speech follows.

I wish to thank you warmly for the kind invitation to keynote the 2014 Business Ethics Conference for Deans of Catholic Schools of Business. I am delighted to assist you in addressing the challenges of Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, where he wrote: “The economy needs ethics to function correctly. ... Efforts are needed ... to ensure that the whole economy — the whole of finance — [be] ethical.”

What can you as business educators do to bring this about? After explaining what our council does, I want to address a few key principles of Catholic social doctrine or teaching that apply to the world of business. Then we can explore what it means to be a good business, leading to what it means to provide good business education. I wish to end with the challenges and expectations of the wider world regarding business, finance and the economy, with Popes Benedict and Francis speaking out forcefully on these

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