NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://www.ncronline.org)

Morris-Young Examines Cardinal Newman Society

Michael Sean Winters | Nov. 23, 2012 Distinctly Catholic

I am guessing that most of you are still recovering from all those carbs! Or, you are busy spending time with family and friends. Hopefully, you have minded the concerns raised in these pages about participating in that orgy of consumerism known as ?Black Friday? and did not camp out at the mall overnight to be the first in line to purchase some new gizmo.

In any event, I am guessing that few people will be reading today, so I am not going to do a big post this morning. But, I do want to call attention to my colleague Dan Morris-Young?s splendid article about the Cardinal Newman Society here at NCR [1]. I especially liked the quote from Father Gerard Lucey, S.J., who throws the text of Ex Corde Ecclesia back at these self-appointed watchdogs.

The issues Morris-Young engages will be with us for a long time. As I have noted before, the desire to censor begins in a humane conviction, the desire to protect those we love from influences that might harm them. But, that desire must be balanced by another desire, especially in the context of forming youth, namely, the willingness to let young people explore, text, examine, argue, and, yes, even fall down at times, so that they learn not to be cowardly. This, in the end, is what is wrong with the Cardinal Newman Society ? and why they are so inaptly named. They are intellectual cowards. Instead of engaging the world, they wish to flee from it. I am all for the monastic rule for those called to that vocation, but even monks must work. At a university, the work in hand is intellectual work. And that work requires engagement, not endorsement or wholesale adoption, but engagement with the world of ideas found in the ambient culture. If the Cardinal Newman Society had been around back then, they would have told St. Paul to stay in Tarsus, better not to go to the Areopagus and, if one must go to the Areopagus, certainly not to begin his proclamation of the Christian Gospel by calling attention to a pagan shrine. The Cardinal Newman Society would probably want St. Paul barred from speaking on a Catholic campus. I suspect that they would take the same stance towards their namesake! They are a scourge.

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[1] http://ncronline.org/news/faith-parish/group-takes-watchdog-role-catholic-identity