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

Jenkins writes Notre Dame grads

Michael Sean Winters | May. 14, 2009 NCR Today

Notre Dame President Father Jenkins? letter to **the graduating class** [1] exposed one of the central fallacies in the **letter he received from Dr. Mary Ann Glendon** [2] when she declined the Laetare Medal.

Glendon wrote then that ?A commencement?not the right place, nor is a brief acceptance speech the right vehicle, for engagement with the very serious problems raised by Notre Dame's decision -- in disregard of the settled position of the U.S. bishops -- to honor a prominent and uncompromising opponent of the Church's position on issues involving fundamental principles of justice.?

Jenkins points out that ?engagement? has been precisely what has been going on since Notre Dame announced that President Obama would be giving this year?s commencement address. ?At the same time, and born of the same duty, a Catholic university has a special obligation not just to honor the leader but to engage the culture,? he wrote. Indeed, for most of us Catholics, the issue has dominated all other political concerns and created countless conversations about the role of the Church in a pluralistic society, the role of a Catholic university in the Church, the different ways to address our common concern for the unborn, and countless other important issues.

Glendon saw the issue of engagement more narrowly and she is entitled to her view. But, Catholic conservatives do not seem to mind such narrowness. They seem intent on putting Catholic intellectual life back into a ghetto. Notre Dame and our other great Catholic colleges and universities were built for the expressed purpose of bringing Catholics out of the ghetto into which they had been forced by poverty and prejudice. Why would we ever choose to go back?

Source URL (retrieved on *10/26/2016 - 08:15*): https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/jenkins-writes-notre-dame-grads

Links:
[1] http://www.americamagazine.org/blog/entry.cfm?blog_id=2&id=30686141-3048-741E-1478087527620579
[2] http://www.catholiceducation.org/articles/education/ed0369.htm