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The Dean's Letter

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THE DEAN'S LETTER

IN MY LETTER in the first issue of the Law Review, I made mention of the significant announcement made at the time of our memorable commemoration of the fourth centennial feast of Saint Thomas of Villanova concerning the foundation of the Institute of Church and State within the School of Law. I should like to acquaint our readers with some of the reasons for the foundation of the Institute and with the scope of its proposed tasks and something of the climate in which those tasks will be performed.

From the very outset we were convinced that a professional school should make a contribution to the community beyond its instructional program. The Institute represents our first effort in this direction. We believe that its subject matter is especially suitable for a church-related university and has a surpassing intrinsic importance at the present moment.

With increasing frequency our courts have been facing complex issues concerning the relative roles of church and state and the interaction between the two. Arising as legal problems, these cases have broad implications and extensive consequences. As was recited in the formal announcement of the Institute: "It is noted that rancor rather than reason has characterized many discussions of church-state relationships in the past. This has been in part due to the lack in our nation of a genuine forum where sincere and knowledgeable men may exchange their honest views in an atmosphere of objectivity. The Institute believes that it can render a distinct service to our country by providing a center to which information and opinion may be brought and weighed by persons who—regardless of religious affiliation—sincerely desire to hear other men's ideas in this area and to achieve reasonable solutions of the problems considered."

The atmosphere in which we expect the Institute to pursue its researches and conduct its conferences is one which will welcome men of fair minds and open hearts who wish to examine church and state problems with a view towards reaching reasonable solutions. It is not our intention to propagandize nor to take positions without study and analysis.

Professor Thomas J. O'Toole, Assistant Dean of the School of Law, is serving as Director of the Institute of Church and State and Professor William B. Ball is associated with him in the work.

In Garey Hall, our new building, there will be provided a headquarters for the Institute. Other facilities in the structure, though designed for the instructional program, are well adapted to house the groups which will be invited to gather and discuss problems within the Institute's scope.

This summer, even before the facilities now under construction are completed, we hope to conduct the first of the Institute's conferences, involving an enquiry into the juridical status of churches. Thus will be launched a project which, we trust, will represent a significant contribution to the development of legal principles relating to church and state.

Harold Gill Reuschlein