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**Remarks of Tim Marx, President and CEO Catholic Charities  
Accepting the Coleman J. Barry Award  
St. John's University  
April 26, 2019\***

Good evening. I am so grateful that you are here to celebrate St. John's and the living legacy of Fr. Colman Barry.

Just over 40 years ago a student in Fr. Colman's Church History class wrote:

*If theology does not speak for the oppressed, it speaks for the oppressors; if it does not speak for the indigent slum dwellers, it speaks for those who imprison them there; a view that the "slum must be taken out of the individual before the individual is taken from the slum" is cruel, callous apathy...If theology ignores the human condition, how can it be an integral part of humanity?*

Fr. Colman, known to be parsimonious with praise, wrote in the margin next to these words: "Good."

That simple affirmation had a powerful and long-lasting impact on that student. These words became part of the student's *weltanschauung*, a concept also taught by Fr. Coleman, based on a German word, meaning "world view". But it has a deeper significance. It is a person's "core", a fusion of mind, body and spirit developed and nurtured, both consciously and unconsciously. A *weltanschauung* serves as a deep keel or ballast that keeps a person afloat and provides a guiding compass when the challenges and temptations of life can cause one to neglect, as Ephesians says, "to live the life worthy of the calling you have received." (4:1)

That student, as I am sure you suspected, was me. And seared into my memory, such that I can still see Fr. Coleman and hear his characteristic "harrumph", was his challenge to his students to develop and nurture a *weltanschauung*.

So, President Hemesath, Abbot John and Board Chair Eldred you likely did not appreciate how deeply honored I would be when I was notified of this award. The glow of many recognitions have short half-lives. For me, this one will not, so I will not request a recount.

Be assured that I read the invitation for tonight closely—it offered a "short" program. It's the end of a long week and many of you have a drive ahead of you. But permit me to offer three reflections on my enduring connection to St. John's.

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\* [csbsju.edu/news/colman-barry-award-2019](https://csbsju.edu/news/colman-barry-award-2019)

First, St. John's, and St. Ben's, offered a depth of knowledge on which to draw for a lifetime. I not only have the papers I wrote for Fr. Colman but also for Fr. Jeremy Murphy who inspired a respect for the rule of law and our constitutional republic; for Dr. Joe Friedrich who taught that economics was anything but dismal, but rather integral to a moral philosophy to guide society; for Dr. Joe Farry who made Augustine, Aristotle, Marx and others relevant and accessible; and for Dr. Eila Perlmutter who inspired a love of literature and sensitized students to split infinitives so they feel like fingernails on a chalk board. And there is the late Dr. John Brandl, not a professor here, but an esteemed graduate, who taught and mentored me at the Humphrey School in the art and science of public policy.

Second, I developed long-term relationships of meaningful connection and love. Let me start with Monica (College of St. Benedict 1981 whom I met on the second floor of Corona Hall on January 15, 1978 and with me has raised sons Daniel and Ben who, in turn, have brought Naomi and Sarah joyfully into our lives), and there are many life-long mentors and friends, including from the class of 1979. At our graduation Mass, the second reading was from 1 Corinthians 12 4-7: *"There are different kinds of gifts but the same spirit; there are different kinds of service but the same Lord; there are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all people."*

My gifts, service and work put me in position to receive a recognition like this, particularly with the opportunity to work at an incredible organization like Catholic Charities, which advances so many of the "Instruments of Good Works" enumerated in Chapter 4 of the Rule of St. Benedict. But my Johnny friends and mentors have followed their own paths to raise families, teach, coach, build, employ, worship, represent, treat, and serve their communities, states and nation with integrity, and give of themselves—one literally with an organ donation—unselfishly and humbly. They helped form and sustain my *weltanschauung*.

For me and many of us, this long-term and meaningful connection is richer because of Fr. Don Talafous, campus chaplain in my day, who produced a weekly paper, yes paper, sprinkled around campus which entertained, inspired and provoked. Today that connection is renewed each day for many of us with that same home-spun and profound inspiration, now by email of course. So many of us have our special "Fr. Don stories" about how he welcomes us when we return to campus and remembers not only our names but something about us that even we have forgotten. Fr. Don, on behalf of so many, thank you and God bless.

Third, in addition to deep knowledge and life-long relationships, I am provided hope for the future. To paraphrase theologian Reinhold Niebuhr *few things worth accomplishing can be accomplished in our lifetime, therefore we must be saved by hope*. Every time I visit campus or read the St. John's and St. Ben's magazines I am awed by what students are learning, doing and dreaming.

Deep knowledge, meaningful and loving relationships, and hope. This is what St. John's continues to offer me due, in part, to that challenge which Fr. Coleman presented, now over 40 years ago. Thank you. Safe travels and God speed.