



9167 Key Commons Court, Manassas, VA 20110  
Ph (703) 367-0333 / Fx (703) 396-8668  
[www.CardinalNewmanSociety.org](http://www.CardinalNewmanSociety.org)

December 18, 2007

Reverend Dennis Dease  
President  
University of St. Thomas  
215 Summit Avenue, AQU 100  
St. Paul, MN 55105

Dear Father Dease:

In recent weeks, many of our members have contacted us about the Catholic identity of the University of St. Thomas. Many have praised the Catholic Studies and philosophy departments and the seminary.

However, these same members also have shared their strong objections to this year's Common Text. We agree completely: *The Handmaid's Tale* is a poor choice for mandatory reading at a Catholic college. It is vulgar and obscene. It endorses a political-social feminist agenda that contradicts and demeans Catholic teaching. It is very disappointing that a Catholic college would sanction this book for required reading and extensive campus-wide focus.

The English department website "calls the attention of the entire campus to the literary and intellectual richness" of the Common Text. It sponsors related events. "[F]aculty in other departments are encouraged to read the text and draw on it in their own courses whenever possible." Conversations should extend "into the residence halls and dining halls."

We respectfully ask for your involvement to resolve this situation. We hope that students will not be required to read *The Handmaid's Tale* next semester.

Further, we respectfully ask that you review the objectives of the Common Text Program. Previous selections also have raised questions about their value on a Catholic campus. It would seem logical that if a Catholic university is to require all freshmen to read one work, it should choose a classic in the Catholic intellectual tradition. There are hundreds and hundreds from which to choose.

Best wishes for a prayerful Advent and success in fulfilling the mission entrusted to you.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Reilly  
President