

*An Open Letter to the University of Dallas Board of Trustees, the Bishop Chancellor,
the Faculty Senate, the Office of the President, and the Office of the Provost
Regarding the Letter Demanding the Removal of Dr. David Upham*

We are called to write this letter for two reasons. First, we seek to defend an honest educator, a charitable mentor, and a good Catholic man. Second, we seek to defend the University of Dallas from those who claim to love her yet strive to change her.

Dr. David Upham has served the UD community for many years. He is a hardworking, kind, joyful man, who openly loves our school, our country, and our Lord. He courageously and respectfully discusses and defends what he loves in the classroom and in the public square. There are times when Dr. Upham's opinions may anger those who disagree with him, and we are living in an age where those who disagree with him increasingly feel that they have every right to silence him as well as anyone who holds similar opinions.

The letter calling for Dr. Upham's termination is proof of this sad truth. We will not respond to the letter in question point by point, for we know your time is limited, and we trust that you do not need any help unraveling such tenuous arguments. We will, however, briefly list some troubling observations.

We must first point out that Dr. Upham's post was wholly consistent with the Church's teaching that God created human beings in His image, that He created them male and female, that He created each person as an embodied soul (i.e. as a union of body and soul).

We must clearly state that Dr. Upham was in no way inciting violence against anyone or "espousing hate out of fear of difference." He was merely warning that the incoming Biden administration poses a real threat to religious liberty. A reasonable person may disagree with Dr. Upham's assessment, but only an unreasonable and intolerant person would see Dr. Upham's assessment as grounds for dismissal and ostracism.

We must also note that the letter, full of twisted logic and calumnious insinuations, attempts to shame not only Dr. Upham but also the university for failing to live in accordance with the brave new rules of secular morality. It is written with the assumption that the demands of this new secular morality hold more weight than the requirements of traditional Catholic morality.

These observations, combined with the other controversies that have erupted at UD this school year, indicate that there are people within and without the institution that wish to see UD embrace political teachings at odds with the teachings of the Catholic Faith.

We believe that UD has been targeted because it is one of the few academic institutions that welcomes teachers who call their students to love and seek the eternal verities of truth and justice rather than conforming to the popular opinions of our age: "*Veritatem, justitiam diligite.*" We believe that Dr. Upham has been targeted because he is just such a teacher, one who stands up for our motto by seeking the truth in philosophic discourse and by fostering the love of justice through disciplined study. If the University of Dallas does not stand with professors like Dr. Upham, what will it stand for? We triumphantly call UD "a Catholic university for independent

thinkers.” The call to dismiss Dr. Upham—for the crime of voicing Catholic teaching and warning about the potential loss of religious liberty—shows that if we do not stand up for independent thought, we will soon cease to be a Catholic university.

The letter calling for the removal of Dr. Upham ends: “Reassure our faith in the Western intellectual and theological tradition by providing no haven or pulpit for those espousing hate out of fear of difference. Be a beacon of Truth, Beauty, and, most of all, *Love*.” There are two substantial mistakes here.

Firstly, anyone who accepts transgenderism cannot have an overly steadfast faith in the Western intellectual and theological tradition, for gender ideology seeks to undermine and eventually rewrite the Western intellectual and theological tradition.

Secondly, the letter invokes two of the three transcendentals (i.e. truth and beauty) but tellingly replaces goodness with love. This specious love is not God’s love. To love as God loves involves seeing the good in each person and also wanting the good for each person. The good for each person is nothing other than perfect communion with God, and this is only possible when a person is free from all sin and error. Thus, *Love* calls us to reach out to and to pray for people who are enslaved to sin and error, but *Love* can never justly call us to accept sin and error for any reason but especially out of a mistaken sense of compassion.

To love as God loves is far from easy. We are all sinners, and we all fall. May God give us the grace to love Him and our neighbor as we ought and to recognize when we fail so that we may improve. And May God bless the University of Dallas and preserve her as a beacon of “[a]cademic excellence embodied in a rigorous Catholic education dedicated to a lifelong pursuit of wisdom, truth and virtue.”

Therefore, we ask that you give unqualified support to Dr. Upham and reaffirm the University of Dallas’s commitment to its mission statement.

With humility and hope,

The undersigned: