

Dr. Simard,  
Vice Rector Hurtubise  
Panelists  
Contributors to the Work  
Guests and Friends  
Etc.,

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my most sincere gratitude and appreciation for having the honor of officially launching the National Ethics Symposium Proceedings, 2004: *Values and Ethics in the Public Sector: How to Serve the Public Interest*. This work reflects upon a subject matter that is profoundly meaningful and extremely pertinent in our day in age. I would like to take a moment and discuss briefly the merits that such an undertaking embodies.

When I first heard of the National Ethics Symposium several years ago, I was immediately intrigued by the nature of its guiding premise: how to serve the public interest? It was, therefore, with great interest that I was pleased to be able to participate in the Symposium in September of 2004. I admired the motivation behind the Symposium then, and I am glad to be able to bare witness to its fruition this evening.

Ethics has always been a subject of extreme significance and importance to human beings. Humankind, insofar as recorded history can enlighten us, has always been concerned with how the good life, in the pursuit of true happiness, is to be lived. Writings that echo across our civilization, as early as the etchings of the pre-socratics, such as Thales of Miletus, up to those of Aristotle and then onto Augustine and Aquinas, and contemporary thinkers such as Romano Guardini or Emmanuel Levinas, are

articulate interpretations of this yearning that is the human condition. At the core of these philosophical undertakings lies a profound desire to expound the *logos* so that humanity can live in accordance with its truth---live as human beings were intended to live.

The National Ethics Symposium addresses the nature of ethics in the contemporary working *polis*. How can a governing entity, and the multiplicity of individuals and organizations that make up a society, form a relationship that operates on mutually recognized ethical principles aiming toward the establishment and maintenance of a just state?

Aristotle, in his wisdom, wrote:

Every state is a community of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good; for mankind always act in order to obtain that which they think good. But, if all communities aim at some good, the state or political community, which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims at good in a greater degree than any other, and at the highest good.

In order for a society to be ethical, each member of the community must act in accordance with virtue. The service of the statesman has always been to instill just laws that foster the highest possible good for all members of the community; laws that reflect in the truest sense the highest potential of the human spirit; in essence, laws that mold virtuous citizens.

For this reason, I am honored to launch a work, which, in and of itself, is a noble service aiming toward the accomplishment of this goal. I extend

my congratulations to all those who contributed to the creation of this compilation and wish you the greatest success in your endeavor this evening.