

# Learning with Uncommon Gratitude

## Audio Transcript

### The Integration of Faith, Life, and Learning

Content adapted from:

Chittister, J. & Williams, R. (2010). *Uncommon gratitude: Alleluia for all that is*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press.

## Slide 1

Upholding the Azusa Pacific motto, *God First*, Los Angeles Pacific University teaches and serves from a Christian worldview through a holistic understanding and practice of faith integration. We believe the entire university community is called to contribute to cultivating hope through learning in the lives of our students, and we accomplish this through our core values of being Exemplary, Caring, and focused on Learning. We are committed to preparing learners not only with the skills and attitudes to succeed in the workplace, but also to point the way to something bigger—to the ultimate hope that is in Jesus Christ.

## Slide 2

Therefore, through their interactions and study at this university, our students will be able to: apply a Christian worldview to their life and work in the world; articulate how and in what ways their life journeys connect to God's story; contribute to the learning community at this university; and recognize God's work in the world through all academic disciplines.

## Slide 3

In this course, our interactions specifically with the book *Uncommon Gratitude: Alleluia for All That Is* will provide the time and space for reflection on the integration of faith, life, and learning. Such an integration is critical because faith is not meant to be separated out from the other parts of our life and learning.

## Slide 4

A danger in attending a Christian college could be that you receive a sprinkling of religious ideas, but are not challenged to reflect upon the implications of the call of the Christian life into *all* aspects of your life, including your studies, career, family, friends, and life goals. Our faith becomes a vital aspect of our life when we see and experience its connection to both our *being* and our *doing*. At Los Angeles Pacific University, we are striving to equip you with the knowledge and resources that can support the cultivation of a rich, growing, and lasting faith.

## Slide 5

*Uncommon Gratitude* is a significant book because it models a posture of faith that takes into account the wide scope of emotions and experiences that we encounter throughout life. It seems that the older we get and the more we experience the world, the more complicated and messy things become - sometimes to the point where we wonder how faith can possibly fit into the picture.

## Slide 6

Even a glance over the chapter titles provides insight into the heavy reality of our world. Titles like faith, doubt, wealth, poverty, divisions, conflict, sinners, saints, life, death, otherness, peace, suffering, crisis, darkness, future, and God likely introduce feelings of uncertainty and angst. You may be asking, What kind of “faith integration” has me dealing with topics like these?

## Slide 7

The answer would be, a commitment to the kind of faith integration that can stand up to the fullness *and* brokenness of the human condition. Singing alleluia for all that is does not mean we sugar coat tragedy with a happy-go-lucky Jesus. As we will read, we learn to sing alleluia for all that is because of the reality and promise of God’s presence and faithfulness. Jesus bears all the marks of this broken world, and does not pretend that those scars do not exist.

## Slide 8

And yet, as our authors point out, alleluia is a call to reflection. Alleluia means simply “All hail to the One who is” and is the arch-hymn of praise, the ultimate expression of thanksgiving, the

pinnacle of triumph, the acme of human joy. It says that God is Good - and we know it, even in the midst of all that happens in and around us.

## Slide 9

God is Good - in faith and doubt, wealth and poverty, life and death, and peace and suffering. Alleluia. God is Good.

## Slide 10

Our authors bring a unique perspective to this idea of “alleluia for all that is.” Joan Chittister is a Roman Catholic Benedictine sister who has been a leading voice in matters of spirituality and contemplation for more than thirty years. Rowan Williams was the Archbishop of Canterbury (the leader of the Anglican Church) and brings his years of international experience writing, speaking, and teaching.

## Slide 11

The partnership of a Roman Catholic and a Protestant on these critical matters of spirituality and faith integration is not to be underestimated. Together, Chittister and Williams offer us a breadth of experience and depth of insight that can minister to the diverse challenges we all experience. Throughout the book, we are reminded that diversity plays a crucial role in our own growth and development, and sometimes it takes a jarring realization to help us see the wider work that God is doing in and for the world.

## Slide 12

So, as you approach this text, take a posture of reflection and contemplation. For the next several weeks, sit with this idea of “uncommon gratitude” and look for connection points to your faith, life, and learning. This book is deliberately quite different from your other texts. Here, the answers are not always so straightforward. But it is when we can learn to sing alleluia that our hope for God’s promises can flourish.