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12/12/2014 - The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas

STEBENVILLE, OH: In light of Torture Report, students continue conversation on University's decision to bestow honorary degree on Michael Hayden – call on officials to consider rescinding degree. The statement follows.

"It is with great disappointment that we, student leaders of past and present, continue to find the occasion for addressing what seems to be a fault in the integrity of our cherished university. It is our right and duty to defend the identity she embraces, as both Catholic and Franciscan, when the identity appears subject to compromise. Today we materialize our commitment to faithful participation in protecting Franciscan University of Steubenville's mission by calling on university officials to rescind the Honorary Doctorate in Public Administration conferred on 11 May, 2012, upon Michael Hayden, former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

"In 2007, while addressing the [12th World Congress of the International Commission of Catholic Prison Pastoral Care](#), Pope Benedict XVI decried the use of torture, saying that those overseeing prisons must eschew "any means of punishment or correction that either undermine or debase the human dignity of prisoners." He continued, citing the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, "In this regard, I reiterate that the prohibition against torture 'cannot be contravened under any circumstances.'" The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), in [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#) listed torture among one of the many intrinsically evil actions, actions which "can never be justified," (22-23).

"The USCCB, in [Catholics in Political Life](#), maintain that, "The Catholic community and Catholic institutions should not honor those who act in defiance of our fundamental moral principles. They should not be given awards, honors or platforms which would suggest support for their actions."

"On December 9, 2014, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence released their "[Committee Study of the Central Intelligence Agency's Detention and Interrogation Program](#)," which highlighted the various uses of torture techniques in the most appalling ways and, on at least one occasion, these actions resulted in the death of a detainee ([cf. 495-6](#)). These kinds of actions have been defended by or performed under the direction of Michael Hayden.

"The [Franciscan University of Steubenville Mission Statement](#) says that its purpose is "to promote the moral, spiritual, and religious values of its students" and in this regard, "endorse the constant teaching of the Catholic Church to avoid all unnecessary proximate occasions of sin and pledge itself not to be a party promoting such occasions."

"On 30 April, 2012, we e-mailed Franciscan University of Steubenville concerning this very subject and later sought an audience with then-President Father Terence Henry, TOR, to learn about the justification for this honor bestowed on Mr. Hayden. We received nothing more than a general response reiterating the content found [in the University's press release](#). By conferring an honorary doctorate upon Michael Hayden, a man who has promoted torturous activity, the type of activity that resulted in the death of at least one person and contributed to the permanent psychological damage of those detainees, it seems the University has promoted sinful activity and the occasions thereof, *i.e.* scandal.

"On 12 January, 2015, the first day of the Spring semester, while we continue to urge the Administration to publicly renounce torture, we will submit the names of the many students, alumni, and friends, in addition to the hundreds united [via our website](#), who join us in petitioning the Institution to fervently study the appropriateness of rescinding Michael Hayden's honorary degree."

Cristina Ramos,
President
Class of 2015

Joseph Antoniello,
3rd President
Class of 2015

Elizabeth McFadden,
2nd President
Class of 2012

Keith Michael Estrada,
Founding President
Class of 2011

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