

Conversations

On Jesuit Higher Education

Spring 2021

Number 59



Showing
the way
to GOD

Walking
with the
Marginalized

Accompanying
Youth in
Hope

Caring
for our
Common Home

Jesuit Education

and the Universal Apostolic Preferences

Second of Two Issues

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A Call to a Better World

Welcome to the second of two issues focused on the Universal Apostolic Preferences laid out by Father Superior General Arturo Sosa, S.J., in 2019. These preferences are to serve as an inspiration for everything the Society of Jesus undertakes through 2029.

Jesuit institutions are an important part of this initiative. In fact, in many ways, Jesuit institutions are in the best position to answer Fr. Sosa's call. We have the intellectual and financial resources, the organization and the structures in place and are already doing much of this work. Perhaps even more important, we have daily access to the young people who will become tomorrow's leaders. Accompanying young people in the creation of a hope-filled future is the third preference and is one of two we focus on in this issue. The other is the second preference, walking with the excluded in a mission of reconciliation and justice.

The two issues couldn't be more timely following a long, hot summer marked by racial unrest and a bitter presidential election that was framed as a battle for the soul of the country. This is, of course, all exacerbated by the pandemic, which has killed so many people around the world and to which there seems to be no end in sight.

So much is not as was expected. Last year's graduates, without celebrating their achievements at a commencement ceremony, entered a job market on life-support. The freshman class that started at our colleges in the fall are receiving instruction in their

homes, where they long for the rite of passage they had expected of going away to college. With fewer people on campus, institutions have had to make hard financial decisions.

All this is to say it can be difficult to find hope.

That doesn't mean it's not out there, you just have to know where to look.

And that, to me, is the promise of Jesuit education. It shows us where to look. It teaches us to open ourselves to the world, to welcome and learn from the other, to shine our own particular light. We look for hope – for God – in all things and know we will be rewarded, for Matthew tells us, “seek and ye shall find.”

People have been ushering 2020 out the door for months, expecting things will be better when the new year dawns. It's obviously just a joke – the toll of a bell on Dec. 31 will not make right all that needs addressing in this country. Everything that made 2020 what it was will be present in 2021 and will linger long after that. Yet there is hope everywhere. You can find it in the stories in this magazine written by people who have been inspired by the Jesuits and by the Universal Apostolic Preferences to serve and do good. I hope they serve as motivation for all of us to do the same.

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The National Seminar on Jesuit Higher Education

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Walking with the Marginalized



Walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world,
those whose dignity has been violated, in a
mission of reconciliation and justice
- Universal Apostolic Preference

A Redemptive Call to the Altar

Anti-Black Racism in Jesuit Higher Education

By Mary Wardell-Ghirarduzzi

As we remember the Black lives that have been lost to state-sanctioned assault and violence, I'm reminded that, as a Black mother and as a Black leader, there is much work needed to keep my children safe. I do this as the necessary safeguard to protect their futures as well as to keep the children of all Black parents safe so they, too, will realize hope-filled futures. As such, I grieve even as I write this piece to help others understand our collective duty to uncover and dismantle systemic racism to protect and safeguard Black lives.

In the past few weeks and months, white colleagues and friends have asked the question, "Mary, what do I do?" or, "Mary, what should we do now?" These prompts led me to think about what is the purpose of redemption, how does reconciliation work, and how do we move from our desolation to spaces of consolation?

As I contemplated these things, I thought of Amy Cooper — a white woman whose verbal attack on a Black man in New York's Central Park went viral in the spring of 2020. Her display of white privilege weaponized against the man she attacked provided a real-life example of whiteness and how white women use their racialized power against Black people in America.

Redemption, reconciliation, and Amy Cooper brought me back to the Altar Call.

Within Black churches, after the sermon, the minister asks all in attendance to respond to the message, to come into the fold of righteousness of God's love and redemption and the community's safeguards of security and belonging.

The Altar Call is an invitation into the beloved church community as a sanctuary and place where healing, hope, and redemption occur. It's a calling into the fold — a blanket of love where people are supported, build meaningful relationships, and are connected to others, a place where people get the help they need to learn and grow, a home to gather, reconcile, and forgive for a higher purpose.

I think there are three kinds of people who answer the Altar Call:

The Ready Repentant. When they arrived at church, when they woke up that morning, when they assessed the state of their life, the Ready Repentant knew exactly what they wanted next for their lives. As soon as the sermon is finished and the invitational song begins, they jump up from their seats, first to head down the aisle toward the altar. They come running as fast as they can. "I know I need to do better," they say. "I just want to be a better person. I am seeking the community's help and support."

The Reluctant Repentant. These people are ready, yet reluctant. In anticipation of the reluctant people, music continues and the minister will wait for those who are reluctant to come forward. So the choir continues, the minister may continue to preach, but the invitational time is still open. And, sure enough, after enough time passes, here come the reluctant ones. They rise up and begin to make their way to the altar. There is much encouragement that happens when reluctant ones come to the altar because the church community already knows who they are and the



church knows they need that encouragement. Everyone starts clapping and hugging them — they knew, and so did everyone else, that the beloved community needs them as much as they need the beloved community. Reluctant ones sometimes end up being some of the best soldiers for righteousness.

The Holdout Unrepentant. These are the tough ones. They don't want to change their lives. They may see the value of sharing in the beloved community; but they aren't willing to change their behaviors. They don't want to change their attitudes, and they are comfortable with their practices. They will not give up the privilege they have to maintain their choices, their lifestyle, their comfort, their power. So they forego the opportunity to redeem themselves altogether. They will not give up what they see as theirs to have — they want to keep things just the way they are. For years, they will outright refuse to accept the opportunity to live within the parameters and demands of the Beloved Community.

This is an Altar Call moment for white people in the United States.

This is an Altar Call moment for white people in Jesuit higher education.

This is an Altar Call moment when white friends and neighbors and colleagues are being asked to commit to do the internal work, to reflect on their whiteness, so they might be redeemed.

To Those who are Ready Repentants: You are the disciples for racial justice and reconciliation on our campuses. To the ones who are currently doing the

work of racial justice, I thank God for you as an ally in how you stand up on issues that matter even when it's challenging for you to do so. Thank you, and step it up more. Ready disciples were made for racial justice and reconciliation work — you know who you are, and we know who you are.

To those who are Ready/Reluctant Repentant: We got you. We have the capacity to

provide support, resources, education and community to help you through the difficult process of deconstructing whiteness and helping you to unlearn things that have harmed you, your friends, Black, Indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), and society.

To those who are a Holdout Unrepentant: You maintain your position on our campuses, you have more power than most, and you have privilege that protects you in the form of relationships with trustees, years of service, position, and status on campus. You are holding back the Beloved Community by keeping things status quo in the name of tradition, security, and liability. You know who you are and so does the rest of the community. More important, God knows. Holdouts will keep us from fulfilling our mission of justice and reconciliation.

This invitation carries with it a series of questions for everyone called to come to the altar. People of color, transgender and gender-non-conforming people, undocumented immigrants, persons with disabilities, and all marginalized members of the Jesuit community are demanding, will you see us? Will you hear our concerns? What will be your response?

The answer to these questions relies upon an ability to fulfill this preferential option that is guided by the principle of equity for a repentant engagement. Do we have the capacities to redeem ourselves through giving preferential tenderness to those who rightfully demand more of us?

How far Jesuit higher education can go on our road to redemption will depend on how our dominant colleagues and friends respond to this monu-

mental time of white supremacy with all of its accompanying harm and atrocities. Repentance, redemption, and critical allyship are the tools we have within our reach to repair the harm of racial injustice and lead us to a place of healing and reconciliation.

How long it takes for the collective Ignatian community to become the Beloved Community will depend on our ability to hold people accountable — including the ones who are holding out and who maintain the status quo through power, privilege, and oppression.

How deep Jesuit higher education goes to reconcile ourselves with the legacies of anti-Black racism and white institutional conditioning depends on how long it takes for white colleagues to see themselves in Amy Cooper, and to be honest with themselves about their own complicity in racial injustice.

Racial justice and reconciliation depends on the internal reflective work our dominant colleagues will engage in to examine their part in racial injustice. Racially just institutions depend on repentance of unconscious and hidden biases and unseen supremacist behaviors.

A Redemptive Framework for Anti-Black Racism

In the Jewish tradition, the Hebrew word *teshuva* is translated as “returning.” As humans, we make mistakes, but the idea of repentance is that we return to the path of righteousness. *Teshuva* is a way back, a process that can restore ourselves with one another. To ensure the fulfillment of the Universal Apostolic Preference of walking with the poor, the excluded, the outcasts of the world as an act of reconciliation and justice, I would like to offer a reparational framework for racial justice and reconciliation informed by *teshuva* for Jesuit universities and social works.

Recognizing harm and injury. Recognition comes in the form of admission and acknowledgement of institutional harm to impacted persons and communities through repentance of the harm. This step is to rebuild righteous relationships with marginalized persons and communities. Recognizing and admitting that you have made mistakes with Black students is essential.

Expressing regret and remorse by asking for forgiveness. This step expresses feelings of shame, guilt, and being able to sit with the discomfort in the harm one has caused. The stain of anti-Black racism is part of the fabric of our institutions and asking for forgiveness is critical.

Desisting from the sin of anti-Black racism. This step examines attitudes, behaviors, institutional practices and procedures, regardless of whether intentional or unintentional, that have led to such institutionalized racism that causes harm to Black students, faculty, alumni, and staff.

Making restitution. Go back to the individuals in the community who have been harmed and make restitution of the damages to the injured in the forms of financial and relational restitution and the redistribution of privileges, power, and resources.

Vowing not to repeat the misdeeds that caused the original harm. Commit to changing one’s actions, attitudes, and behavior to integrate this reparational approach in institutional processes that adopt antiracism and center the needs and experiences of BIPOC, trans* and gender non-conforming community members, immigrants, and persons with disabilities. When faced with similar situations or decisions, an institution or individual representatives will make different choices as an act to make room for a new beginning. Rebuild our institutional cultures with empathy, accountability, and liberation.

In closing, my faith gives me hope that we can build healing institutional cultures through the redemptive framework of *teshuva*. Reconciliation requires both accountability and liberation. This will occur when we address anti-Black racism and racial injustice on our campuses. In the days, months, and years ahead, may we reclaim our Ignatian witness with an antiracist, redemptive framework and reflection that will heal our wounds and help us move forward in our commitment to racial justice.

Mary Wardell-Ghirarduzzi is vice provost for diversity, engagement, and community outreach at the University of San Francisco.

A Story of Hope

Educating the Rural Poor of Northeast India

By Paul Coelho, S.J.

Looking back now, the story of the Jesuit schools in northeast India has been one of unsolicited hope. Things happened unexpectedly, certainly not as the village folks had anticipated or, for that matter, even the Jesuits. But since the arrival of the Jesuits some 50 years ago, the lives of numerous people in remote tribal villages have been transformed.

Make no mistake -- educating the rural poor was not the reason the Jesuits came to northeast India. In 1970, they were invited by the government of Nagaland to establish a school in Kohima, the state capital, patterned on the lines of North Point. For those unfamiliar with North Point, it is a Jesuit residential school in Darjeeling that serves an affluent clientele. It is exclusive, elite and expensive. So the initial plan was really quite straight forward: The Jesuits would educate the children of small clusters of affluent and ambitious Naga families.

But things did not go as planned. Various covert forces made sure the Jesuits would not find land for their school in Kohima. So the Jesuits moved 15 kilometers to the south, to a tribal village called Jakhama. The village was neglected

and undeveloped and, like most other villagers of the region, the people of Jakhama were mainly subsistence farmers. They cultivated rice in terraced fields, as their ancestors had done before them, not aspiring for much more from life. The education offered in the local schools was such that those who could afford it sent their children to schools elsewhere. What soon became clear was the gulf between what the Jesuits imagined they would be doing and where they found themselves.

Disappointed possibly, but not willing to back away, the Jesuits decided to start a school for the local children. That first year, the students who enrolled were a motley bunch with many who were bigger and older than their teachers. Notwithstanding many setbacks, the school thrived through the efforts of the early Jesuits and the sisters who collaborated with them. Leaders from the neighboring villages were soon requesting the Jesuits for similar schools.

Gradually a second, and then a third, school opened in the surrounding villages. In 10 years, the Jesuits had schools in almost every village in the region. They wanted to ensure that every child had access to a decent education if they wanted. By now, serving the rural poor had become the preferred option of the Jesuits, even shunning opportunities to be in the urban centers.

While these schools were taking root in and around Jakhama, two other Jesuits moved north toward Tuensang and Kiphre to set up a network of schools in villages and small towns located along an arterial road that connects the eastern part of the state. These schools, not unlike the ones around Jakhama, served people who had never imagined their children would ever have access to a decent education. In fact, many did not have any idea of what good all-around education was.



Paul Coelho, S.J., is principal of the newly established St. Xavier's College, in Umoid, Meghalaya. This article first appeared in Jivan magazine: Jesuits in India: Views and News.

Hope is not just about trusting that the things that are deeply desired will someday be realized. It is also about getting what one realistically never anticipated. In 1977, the Jesuits started a teachers' training college nearby. They wanted to ensure the village schools were staffed by trained local teachers. They also set up an agro-industrial institute in another village. Agricultural and vocational training were a part of the Jesuit educational plan for the region. But, unfortunately, this did not resonate well with the parents who desired an education that would prepare their children for government jobs, if not a professional career.

In 1985, the Jesuits established their first college. With many students going in search of college education elsewhere, the Jesuits felt the need to offer tertiary educational opportunities within the region. They established a college in Jakhama where they had accidentally landed some 15 years earlier. By this time, however, there were many who felt that the Jesuits should be in the urban hubs, establishing the kinds of educational institutions for which they are reputed. But the rural thrust did not change.

It is important to recognize how these rural Jesuit institutions have inspired the tribal students and their families. Let me quote Apong, a middle-aged resident of a small village in Arunachal Pradesh, who echoed the sentiment of many parents. He put it succinctly, "We know you all could have gone anywhere. But we are so grateful you chose to come to us. If not for you, I would probably have been dead by now. I am not sure what would have become of my children.

I imagine they would have continued living like me and our ancestors, in abject poverty, drunkenness and ignorance."

Living in a decent brick home now, which has replaced the bamboo structure which once was his home, Apong's eldest son, Sanjay, is a youth leader and secretary to the locally elected member of the state legislature. Jesuit alumni from other tribal villages are doctors and professors, bureaucrats and politicians, engineers, teachers, and researchers. They are in a host of other professions that neither they nor their families could ever have imagined or anticipated.

Spread across five of the seven states of northeast India, the 31 Jesuit schools of the Kohima Region continue to serve the rural poor. But it has not always been easy to focus their educational efforts almost exclusively in villages. Without any income-generating schools to support their plans for future expansion, or to subsidize their financially deficit village schools, the Jesuits have had to constantly depend on outside help. The pressure, and the temptation, to have a few urban schools has been strong. But the Jesuits have successfully held their ground. What was initially a consequence of unanticipated and unfortunate circumstances is now intentionally embraced as the preferred option.

Hope, as I mentioned earlier, is not about getting what one anticipates. It is also about getting what one would never realistically expect. And hope is one thing the Jesuit schools of the Kohima Region have given the rural poor of Northeast India.



Fr. General Arturo Sosa, SJ, visits St. Paul's School, site of the beginnings of the mission serving the rural poor. Fr. Anand Pereira, SJ, Fr. Sosa, Fr. Melvil Pereira, SJ, Mission Superior, and Fr Arul, SJ, former mission superior lead the way. 50 Years ago, three Jesuit priests founded the Kohima Mission in Northeast India, situated above Myanmar and Bangladesh. It was the occasion for Fr. General Arturo Sosa, SJ, to visit the expanded Jesuit Mission and celebrate their accomplishments.



Construction on Xavier College Umoid in southwest Khasi hills was delayed by the pandemic, and cancelled Don Doll, SJ's visit to photograph the latest construction.



Architect rendering of the Girl's Residence



Fr. Sunny Augustine, SJ, Loyola college principal greets students.



Fr. Paul Coelho, SJ, welcomes students in a temporary classroom.

The Kohima Mission decided to continue its service to the rural and underserved Garo and Khasi peoples in Meghalaya.



Loyola College is situated in the rolling hills of East Garo Hills District in Williamnagar, Meghalaya. In a few short years they have enrolled over 700 students. Fr. Sunny Augustine, SJ, is the administrator. In the nearby high school, they serve another 648 students.



Over 2700 alumni, students and friends attended Fr. Sosa's Jubilee Mass on the Loyola College Campus



Fr. Raymond D'Souza, SJ, founder of the Kohima Mission "wraps" Fr. Arturo Sosa, SJ.



Fr. Walter Fernandes, SJ, author of 70 books, shares his **History of the Kohima Mission** with Fr. Arturo Sosa, SJ, and fellow Jesuits.



Stone obelisks are erected for historic events. Original founder of the Kohima Mission, Fr. Hector D'Souza, SJ, unveils the honorary plaque.

Photographs
by
Don Doll, S.J.

Accountability Does Not Need Destruction; I Learned This in Prison

By David Safavian

Nine years ago, I was sitting in a cell, wondering what happened to me. A former White House official, I was now Prisoner 28247-016. After 22 straight days in solitary confinement, I broke down. I began to pray — and didn't feel quite so alone. The day I walked out of prison, I vowed to fix the system that seemed designed to break me and everyone else who encounters it.

Now, I run one of the most effective organizations in the country dedicated to criminal justice reform. We have notched legislative victories across the country and changed peoples' lives by working with the Trump Administration to enact the first major criminal justice reform bill in a generation. The First Step Act of 2018 will transform federal prisons from warehouses of humanity into centers focused on rehabilitation. Our work in Louisiana gave convicted felons the right to vote. And bills we helped pass in Pennsylvania and Utah create systems for automatic expungement, providing ex-offenders with a "clean slate" if they stay crime-free for seven years. But there is so much more work to do.

Our justice system wreaks havoc on individuals charged with crimes. But it also does massive collateral damage to families and communities. Indeed, the criminal justice system has a significantly disproportionate impact on communities of color. While African Americans make up 13% of the U.S. population, 40% of those in state prisons are black.

Yet, the system stubbornly resists reforms. By accepting the judgments of politicians who allow this to go on, we are complicit. We become responsible for pushing people to the margins.

Of course, we must hold people responsible for crimes they commit. The question is how we do so. Yes, we must be protected from dangerous offenders.

But for those convicted of low-level crimes, there are other, more effective ways to change behavior — ways which do not destroy the human potential of large swaths of our population. The fiscal and social costs of a prison sentence should be reserved for those society rightly fears, rather than for people with whom we are merely angry. We can have accountability without the utter destruction caused by incarceration.

The conditions of incarceration are just as troubling as the broad social effects. Prison rape and assault are regular occurrences. Women are shackled while in labor. Overcrowded cells become hotspots for COVID-19, resulting in death sentences for some convicted of minor crimes. One prison in Mississippi had dangerous mold growing on the walls, with prisoners only getting access to showers once a month. Not surprisingly, an epidemic of violence and suicide broke out.

And once a person is branded a criminal, the tag follows for life. Being an "ex-con" means fewer job opportunities, often making a criminal conviction an economic life sentence. People with criminal records are half as likely to get a job interview. And even when they land a job, data show that salaries for the justice-involved are 30% less than those with a clean rap sheet. Ex-offenders are routinely blocked from housing and educational opportunities, as well.

So, it is no wonder half of those released from prison end up re-incarcerated. It is a system that seems tailor-made to limit human potential, and one that my faith leads me to want to change.

One of the convictions I have come to, both through my Jesuit education and my spiritual life, is that Jesus would have been a criminal justice reformer. He spoke of measured justice ("whoever is without sin, cast the first stone"), forgiveness

“forgive, and you will be forgiven”), and human dignity (“when I was in prison, you visited me”). And, of course, his trial and execution spoke volumes about the need for fairness in criminal procedure and sentencing reform.

Precisely because of Jesus’ teaching and example, I have come to believe that we as a society must question our own roles in today’s system of “justice.” We send millions of people to prison for low-level and non-violent crimes—often for decades. Americans are likely no more criminally prone than citizens of other countries. So why do we lock up more of our own than every other industrialized nation on the planet? Based on data, it’s not for public safety purposes: The United States has the highest reported incarceration rate in the world — 698 people per 100,000 residents — yet we rank in the bottom half in terms of public safety. Because of decisions made by our political leaders, America’s system of justice is more focused on punishment than rehabilitation.

The Jesuit tradition reminds us to find God everywhere, even in prisons. It affirms the centrality of care for the whole person and promotes a faith that does justice. It insists that every human person merits basic human dignity, regardless of their flaws, and it calls us to accept that all are created in God’s image, all are capable of being redeemed and forgiven.

The Jesuit tradition impels us to assume our responsibility for making change in our world—which includes our prisons.

David Safavian, general counsel of the American Conservative Union and director of the American Conservative Union Foundation’s Nolan Center for Justice, holds degrees from St. Louis University (BA), Michigan State University (JD), Georgetown University (LL.M), and Loyola University of Maryland (MBA). A former White House official in the George W. Bush Administration, he was convicted in 2008 of making false statements and obstructing an investigation. He was pardoned by President Donald J. Trump in February of 2020.



Vulnerability, Recognition and Accompaniment

By James F. Keenan, S.J.

If **privileged people** today wish to learn what it means to walk with or accompany marginalized people, they need look no further than what Jesus teaches his followers. For Jesus, accompaniment is really the third of three steps — following upon an embrace of one's own vulnerability and a recognition of the need of the other.

I want to suggest, through a reexamination of Gospel texts, that to walk with or accompany the marginalized is the third of three steps the Lord calls us to take.

Vulnerability

One of my favorite philosophers is Judith Butler, who realized that we had a problem with identifying vulnerability as “being in need.”

Butler insisted that vulnerability was not primarily about need but about the capacity to respond. Vulnerable people are able to hear the call of the other. Vulnerability is not first about weakness but about availability. This is why people who suffer want to be accompanied by vulnerable people, they know that vulnerable people appreciate their predicament.

If we want to respond to the other in need we have to be vulnerable in the true sense of the word. Some say the word “vulnerable” means being or having been wounded. But that is not how the word is being used here. To be vulnerable means to have the capacity to be wounded, to be exposed, at risk and responsive to the other.

This understanding of vulnerability helps us reread the Good Samaritan parable by asking who is the vulnerable one, the wounded man or the Samaritan?

Remember, there is an overlooked trick in the parable. In answer to the question, who is my neighbor, we think, at the start, that the neighbor is the

wounded one on the road. At the end, we realize the neighbor is the one who showed mercy. We think of “neighbor” first as an object of concern, but then realize it is the subject who responds.

Vulnerability functions the same way. The vulnerable one lies on the road, but he's passed by two invulnerable people, concerned with solving all the big problems of their day, yet unable to recognize the man they pass by. Only the Samaritan is vulnerable to the wounded man.

In a memorable text, Butler writes “You call upon me, and I answer. But if I answer, it was only because I was already answerable; that is, this susceptibility and vulnerability constitute me at the most fundamental level and is there, we might say, prior to any deliberate decision to answer the call. In other words, one has to be already capable of receiving the call before actually answering it. In this sense, ethical responsibility presupposes ethical responsiveness.”

Recognition

Recognition depends on vulnerability. We cannot recognize the “other” unless we are vulnerable. Think of the “inability” of the priest and the Levite who “overlook” the wounded man. No vulnerability means no capacity to recognize.

Jesus' parables are often about recognition. The rich man never recognized Lazarus even as he stepped over him. The damned, confounded goats in the parable of the sheep and the goats never recognized the hungry, thirsty, sick or imprisoned. Like the goats, the challenge for people of privilege is to recognize those who are not.

Yet, recognition is the first response of vulnerable people.

As a nation we are learning now to recognize that Black Lives Matter. The campaign is a call to

recognition, a wake-up call to white people in America that they have too long overlooked racial inequities in health care, education, and in the arts; racial profiling, excessive force, and mass incarceration by law enforcement; and the overall accommodation of white supremacy in our society.

That's why recognizing the names of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Trayvon Martin, Rodney King, Emmett Till, and so many more victims of American racism is so important. That recognition helps us to grow in vulnerability. The two go hand in hand.

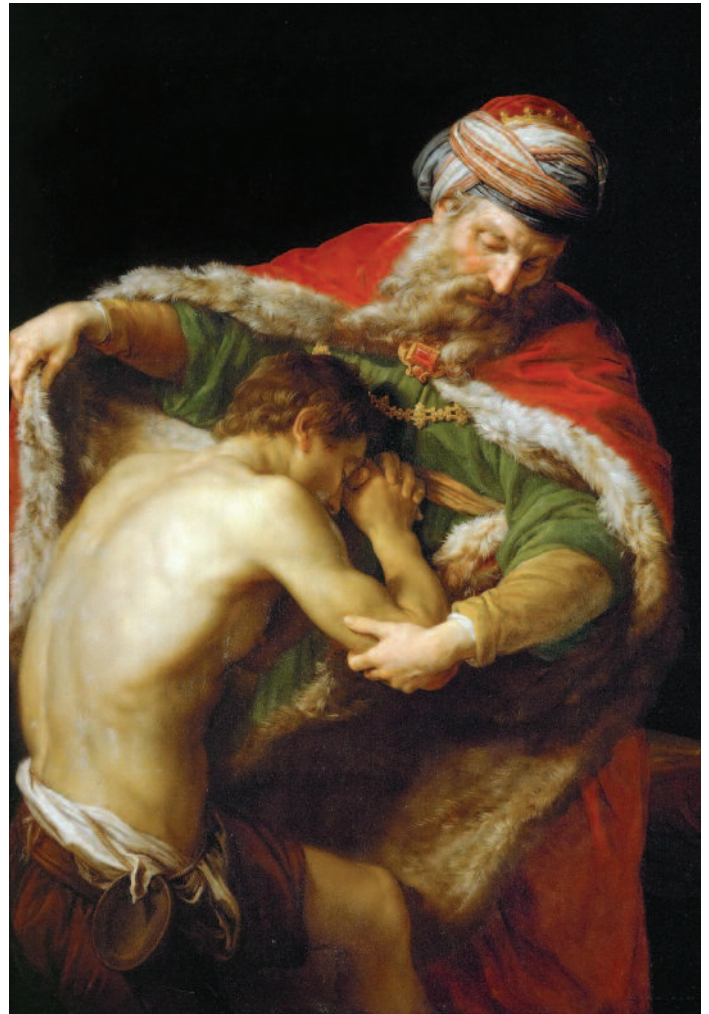
The parable of the Prodigal Son highlights how they do this. The father is the vulnerable one who recognizes his son in the distance, rushes to him, embraces him, and welcomes him, thus beginning the process of accompaniment.

Accompaniment

The story continues. The vulnerable father knows that as soon as he runs toward his younger son he triggers the resentfulness of his privileged son. But the father is vulnerable to both and wants the older one to learn recognition. The older son says "that son of yours," distancing himself from the prodigal, but the father forces him to remember the family relationship with "your brother was dead." The end of that parable leaves us with the challenges of accompaniment. Accompanying those on the margins triggers resentfulness from the privileged. Being vulnerable means responding to both.

Think of the man born blind. He's healed and the leaders of the people are unsettled. Accompanying the one on the margins triggers a lot of repercussions. Responding to the one on the margins provokes. (As an aside: Think of the hoopla when Jesus tells the parable of paying first the laborers arriving late. Congregations really tense up when they hear that one!)

Often enough, we are held hostage by the possibility of encountering the wrath of resentfulness. Unlike the father, we do not run to respond, we do not want to unsettle the privileged, the supremacists, the relatives, the community. We might be vulnerable, we might even recognize, but we hesitate to accompany because we are harnessed by the expected repercussions.



Pompeo Batoni: The Return of the Prodigal Son.

Still, these three steps are the stuff of following Christ. Deeply interconnected, we grow in one as we grow in the others.

That third step, however, is not simply to accompany the marginalized. It also involves the responsibility to help the ones perplexed by what we do. Like the prodigal father we cannot let the older one walk away. "Son," he calls the elder one. Vulnerable to the son in need, the father remains vulnerable to the one unsettled. Like him, we cannot simply walk away from those who do not recognize.

Still, though we have to respond to both, we need to remember that the father did not hesitate to accompany the precarious son whom he recognized on the horizon, and that's the step assuredly we cannot miss.

James F. Keenan, S.J., is vice provost for global engagement, Canisius professor, and director of The Institute at Boston College.



The Resilience of Guatemalan Women

Walking the Journey from Victim to Survivor to Leader

By Kristi Lee

Women across the world are in dire need of solutions that promote their dignity and secure justice for them. These women, of course, should be understood as the primary creators of those solutions. Scholars at Jesuit colleges and universities, through collaboration with women around the world, have a responsibility to use their substantial power and privilege to support and accompany them into this better future.

With the promotion of justice as central to the mission of Jesuit higher education, we can leverage our skills and knowledge to understand, and propose solutions to the toxic impacts of systematic exclusion, exploitation, and marginalization. As Father Sean Carroll, S.J., of the Kino Border Initiative, writes, research and scholarship that is “rooted in the reality of people’s experiences, is collaborative, unpacks root causes through deep analysis and then shows a way forward with a lens of respect for human dignity.”

Gender-based violence, which the World Health Organization defines as any act that “results in, or is

likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women...whether occurring in public or in private life,” has been identified as one of the largest human rights violations in the world. Sadly, no country or people are immune from this toxic force.

Guatemala has a rich Mayan history and stunning landscapes, but due to historic and complex forces of brutal colonization, civil war, ineffective government, and extreme poverty, its women suffer some of the highest rates of violence and death in the world. And yet, despite the odds, women in Guatemala are walking a pathway from being victims to survivors of gender-based violence, then to becoming leaders who fight for others. How are they achieving this? That question requires the kind of research Fr. Carroll advocates.

Our collaborative research team, made up of faculty and students from Universidad Rafael Landívar-Quetzaltenango and Seattle University, used a qualitative research methodology to conduct individual and group interviews to understand what women need to make this journey from victim to

survivor to leader. Our research participants were women who have experienced gender-based violence in their lives and women who walked with and supported them. Governmental and NGO offices opened doors for us and shared their own experiences, which deeply enriched our understanding. Every interview, every look, every conversation and every tear of the women we met reflected the pain thousands of women have suffered throughout their lives. These encounters helped us to understand what these women victims needed in order to heal psychologically and become survivors, and then go on to become leaders in the fight against gender-based violence.

We learned from our participants that they needed several things. First, they needed information about their rights, and options as to legal processes and social resources available to them. This information is key in helping women escape violent situations.

Second, we learned that women needed access to culturally appropriate counseling and psychological services to facilitate their healing. Gender-based violence destroys self-esteem; counseling can help to recover self-esteem and self-efficacy. Further, these services need to be free. Poverty is extreme in Guatemala, particularly for indigenous Mayan women. Without free access to services, this route to healing would not be possible.

Third, women needed training in the processes that would enable them to fight the systemic and cultural causes of gender-based violence. Women learned public speaking, community organizing skills and how to write proposals to local government. Armed with new skills and knowledge, they worked to change the systems that support violence.

Finally, we learned that women need each other in every step of this journey. Women teach each other what they have learned about their rights. They support and love each other while they heal. Then they band together to make changes in their communities. Women are the reason other women survive.

Research for the sake of knowledge itself is insufficient here. When research uncovers

a social issue, we cannot be indifferent. We are called to move, to speak out, and to denounce all kinds of injustice. Thus, the next stage of our research aims to use our findings to collaborate on creating a program to support women who are walking the path to surviving and thriving.

Then, we aim to bring the knowledge and programs built in the cultural context of Guatemala to the United States in order to support immigrant women and girls who experienced gender-based violence in their home country, or here in the United States. This has the potential to provide a more effective, culturally relevant approach for supporting women and girls from Guatemala who are walking the journey of healing and hope.

There is much work to do, and these resilient and strong women deserve our attention, advocacy, and accompaniment. Once a society recognizes its social problems, it has the possibility of developing and adopting dynamic solutions to those problems. The message of this research is this: We must walk together and work to transmit a message of and a plan for inclusion, respect, and appreciation. Guatemalan women, as well as women all over the world, deserve a life where their rights and dignity are respected.

Kristi Lee is an assistant professor in the counseling department at Seattle University.



Photos courtesy of Seattle University.

What Should Ignatian Antiracism Look Like?

By Joseph A. Brown, S.J.

People in Jesuit education often recite portions of Decree 4 of the 32nd General Congregation of the Jesuits, especially the part of that 1975 document that speaks to the ministry of education, then and now.

We must help prepare both young people and adults to live and labor for others and with others to build a more just world ... we shall contribute to the formation of those who, by a kind of multiplier-effect, will share in the process of educating the world itself.

Twenty years earlier, in 1955, Mary McLeod Bethune, the aged civil rights activist and educator, published this moving and prophetic call:

I leave you, finally, a responsibility to our young people. The world around us really belongs to youth, for youth will take over its future management. Our children must never lose their zeal for building a better world. They must not be discouraged from aspiring to greatness, for they are to be the leaders of tomorrow. Nor must they forget that the masses of our people are still underprivileged, ill-housed, impoverished and victimized by discrimination. We have a powerful potential in our youth, and we must have the courage to change old ideas and practices so that we may direct their power toward good ends.

And in writing about the centrality of African American studies, novelist Toni Morrison said this:

It was and is at the heart of the heart of the nation. No policy decision could be understood without the Black topic at its center, even, or especially, when unmentioned. Not housing, not education, the military, economy, voting, citizenship, prisons, loan practices, health care —

name it, the real subject was what to do with Black people, which became a substitute term for poor people.

Now, with these three perspectives in mind, what should Ignatian antiracism education look like?

Simply put: We must recognize that, to paraphrase the psalmist, the stone which the builders have long rejected must become the cornerstone. Since racism is the central factor for understanding the truth of the founding of what is now the United States and since racial displacement and enslavement is the basis for American capitalism, we must make antiracism education the cornerstone of Jesuit education in the United States.

To do this, faculty recruitment, curriculum, and academic disciplines must all proactively advance antiracism. In recruiting faculty, Jesuit institutions should focus on competent scholars who are capable of engaging students in learning the intricacies of the racism that is at the heart of the heart of the nation. Furthermore, classes that engage themes of race and racism must become graduation requirements, from undergraduate programs straight through to professional and doctoral programs.

Regardless of whether the field is medicine, law, business, anthropology, sociology, geography, the military sciences, or the fine and performing arts — let those who teach examine with their students how these disciplines developed to support the racial and economic advantages of some and not of others. And let them further endeavor to reshape their disciplines to support and advance antiracist ends.

All disciplines can learn from the struggle of Black scholars, preachers, artists and activists — people who have always been made to find a past that is indeed usable. Because being Black is to be imprisoned in existentialism and modernism — forced to have no past and no future — Black culture has pri-

oritized keeping alive the stories of how the most de-based and abused could find within themselves, and in their ancestors, those survival strategies that provide priceless wisdom amid the crises facing the world today.

Of course, the same holds true for theology, long deployed to support racist systems and attitudes, but also to advance antiracism. Indeed, from the groaning and singing on the ships that brought enslaved captives to the land of their exploitation and degradation, successive generations of African Americans have used their cultural gifts and their faith to imagine themselves as fully human, even as they resisted the traumas of enslavement and its enduring effects. They have realized that the roots of Catholicism, and Christianity in general, went deep into African soil and souls, and they have reappropriated the story of the Israelites' liberation, demanding that same liberation of the God of their oppressors. This same story holds true for Native and Indigenous peoples, too.

Lessons about how faith has historically served antiracist ends should be taught in every theology and religious studies department at U.S. Jesuit colleges and universities — not to mention in Jesuit high schools.

The imperative is clear: U.S. Jesuit institutions can and must ensure that faith serves antiracist ends once again, here and now.

We rightly celebrate Jesuit education, and we continually aspire for our schools to be distinctive and superior. But we must remember that Ignatius saw the ministry of education as a way to bring talented young people into the ranks of the Society of Jesus. It is far past time for the Society of Jesus and their collaborators in higher education to recognize that these institutions are not ours — they belong, as Mary McLoed Bethune knew, “to the youth... for they are to be the leaders of tomorrow.”

With this in mind, might one goal of Ignatian antiracism be to identify students of color willing to be trained for leadership in our schools as soon as they are trained, preparing and inviting them to assume the highest levels of leadership? That would mean truly integrating Jesuit education — demonstrating by example that antiracism is indeed the cornerstone.

Joseph A. Brown, S.J., is professor of Africana Studies at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.



Going Beyond Tolerance and Acceptance

By Richard Reitsma

Religion and religious institutions are frequently viewed by many LGBTQ+ folk, as harmful to the healthy growth and maturation of the whole person. Viewing religion as generally hostile toward LGBTQ+ people stems from their lived experiences, regardless of the faith traditions within which they were raised. These negative experiences include things such as the sexual abuse scandals to conversion therapy and familial rejection. For many, it is difficult to reconcile their faith with their sexuality, when from the pulpits they hear rhetoric condemning them for who they are, how they feel and identify, and whom they love. Though painful, many often end up rejecting their faith family.

There is, of course, some hope in the words of Pope Francis about not judging others, and accepting people, though this is nuanced in the context of sin and temptation, from which one must turn away, resist, or repent. Yet, the church still advocates policies that are seen as limiting LGBTQ+ people from experiencing a full life of the whole self, for example condemning LGBTQ+ people who choose not to live a celibate life. While his words against judgmental and discriminatory treatment of the LGBTQ+ community are important, I would challenge those who walk with LGBTQ+ to consider that tolerance, acceptance, and validation are problematic attitudes.

Tolerance, acceptance, and validation all imply relationships of power, and those who are tolerated or accepted know that at any point that privilege of the approval of others can be taken away. Many LGBTQ+ folk have struggled long and hard to find a place of peace for themselves, and mistrust those who spout mere words of tolerance or acceptance. What LGBTQ+ folk need is for their communities to love, honor, and celebrate them, and learn from and with them. This is the only way to care for the whole self.

Too often, church rhetoric can seem to be only about care of a part of the self, while ignoring or not nourishing the part of the self that is sexual and gender different. It is not enough to accept and support an LGBTQ+ person while at the same time treating their sexuality and gender identity as unimportant, irrelevant, or something that causes discomfort. True allyship is accompanying the whole person, loving the whole

person, and learning from, living with, and celebrating the whole. This includes a person's sexuality and it requires that those who believe these words of accompaniment do so regardless of whether or not they know someone personally who is LGBTQ+. It requires more than words, or a safe space symbol. It requires action, which can take many forms. Speaking out against homophobia and transphobia, marching, protesting, celebrating brothers and sisters who are different, actively protesting against discriminatory laws, policies, and institutional, local, national, and international practices.

In the current context of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and the racial unrest that marked the summer of 2020, many advocates for BLM are suggesting people need to confront their own racism, educate themselves about race and racism, become actively antiracist, and deconstruct and decolonize race and their role therein.

Many books and films have been lauded, podcasts promoted, and Internet challenges suggested to help people understand the dynamics of racism and begin the process of deconstructing it. The same can and must be done with regard to LGBTQ+ lives. Learn about, join, support, and participate in one of the many organizations that work intersectionally with race, migration, and gender/sexuality. Learn about the lives, challenges, and histories of LGBTQ+ folk.

I offer a humble beginning of a reading, viewing, and listening list to get you started and advocate that your local libraries, colleges and universities not merely make these materials available, but include them in integral ways within the curriculum and programming. (See sidebar.)

Whatever you do, do so with a mind to learn, a heart to change, and a will to stand up and accompany those who are LGBTQ+ on their journey to wholeness, in the spirit of *cura personalis*. As you grow in knowledge, share that with others. Join in the long march to equality: it will make the journey shorter.

Richard Reitsma teaches Spanish, Latin American Studies and Honors courses at Canisius College.

Learning and Teaching About LGBTQ+

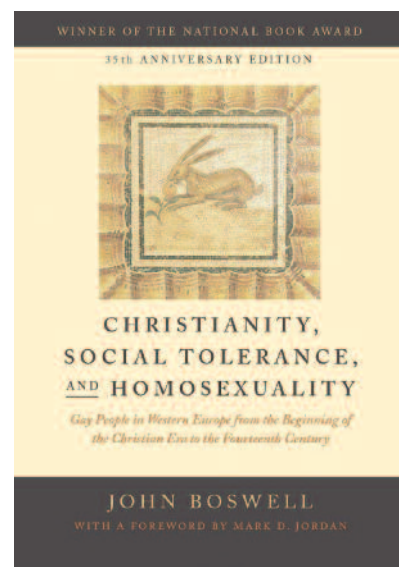
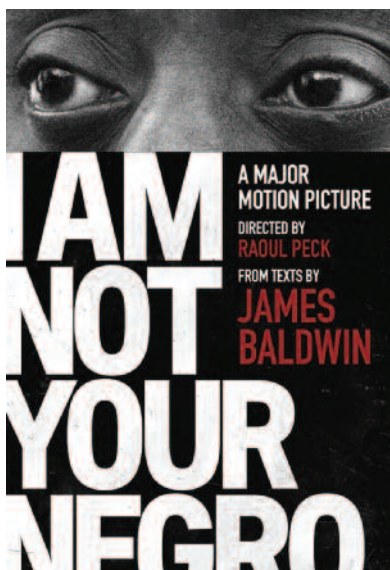
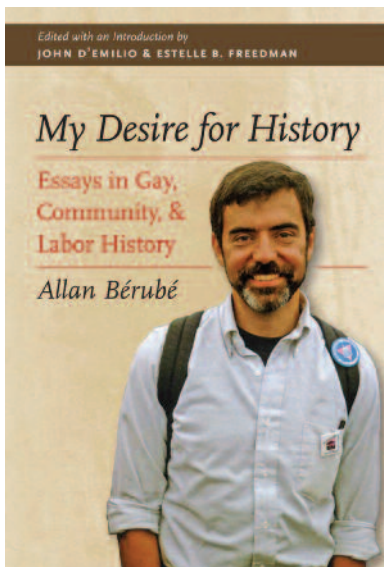
There are many ways to educate yourself and others on issues of the LGBTQ+ community. Here are just a few.

- Read Allan Bérubé's *"My Desire for History: Essays in Gay, Community, and Labor History,"* an introduction to the presence of LGBTQ+ people in history, and how sexuality, gender, race, and class have always intersected in the American struggle for freedom and equality.
- Watch *"I Am Not Your Negro,"* a film exploring the intersection of race and sexuality through the life of James Baldwin.
- Read Daniel A. Helminiak's book *"What the Bible Really Says about Homosexuality."*
- Read John Boswell's *"Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the 14th Century."*
- Educate yourself about Harvey Milk, Bayard Rustin, Marsha P. Johnson

(there are films/documentaries, and essays on all of them) and other leaders in the struggle for LGBTQ+ equality. Then learn about LGBTQ+ people outside the U.S.: Learn about the *muxe* from Oaxaca, Mexico, and the *hijras* in India. Learn how different cultures and peoples view gender and sexuality, study how historically gender and sexuality have been understood differently. Celebrate and stand with that difference.

- Read LGBTQ+ fiction. Watch TV and film with LGBTQ+ themes. Talk to people (and not just LGBTQ+ people) about what you've read and watched. There is an ever-growing wealth of fiction, film, television, podcasts, and streaming media being produced exploring LGBTQ+ lives. Don't be afraid. Dive in, enjoy it, recommend things to friends, family, neighbors and community. Support LGBTQ+ writers and artists.
- Go to a local community organiza-

tion or museum (most major cities have something like the Leslie Lohman Art Museum in NYC, WEAM in Miami Beach, GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco); explore their collections (much material is also available online); major museums will sometimes have LGBTQ+-themed exhibits. Many cities offer LGBTQ+-themed historical walking tours (and now these are also available virtually). Join a social or activist group. Donate to organizations promoting LGBTQ+ causes, support LGBTQ+ homeless youth who are often homeless because of familial and social rejection too frequently justified by religious teachings, fear, and misunderstanding. Work within your faith communities to heal old wounds, to restore broken families, and to seek justice and healing for those wronged. And ask for forgiveness.



The Jesuit Mission: Occupational Justice

By Leah S. Dunn

The temporary occupational disruption that so many have experienced as a result of stay-at-home orders implemented to fight the coronavirus pandemic, are, for many, frustrating. But imagine how frustrating it would be to experience such disruption all the time. Recognizing the depth of that frustration ultimately can lead to the recognition that, in fact, millions of people experience this marginalization on a daily basis as a kind of apartheid — a system of segregation based upon limiting access to an experience of purpose and meaning that comes with true occupational justice.

Long-standing marginalization due to life circumstances or systemic constraints, including but not limited to poverty, refugee/asylum seeker status, quarantine, racism and other “isms,” trauma, mental illness, incarceration, substance abuse, homelessness, and others, bring about an occupational marginalization. That is, the inability to participate in desired occupations due to invisible social, political, or cultural norms.

By living our Jesuit mission of walking with the marginalized, we, as educators, can address how prejudice, bias, and systemic constraints affecting our fel-

low neighbor create occupational marginalization and apartheid. Our Jesuit mission of walking with the marginalized calls us to bear witness to this marginalization and apartheid, and to seek occupational jus-

tice. This justice examines the lack of access or limited engagement in desired activities through a social justice perspective to analyze the social, physical, and systemic environments preventing one’s occupational choice. Dominant powers create the structures and systems that allow individuals to “occupate,” often without consideration of their impact on the non-dominant. The inability to participate in desired occupations affects an individual’s sense of purpose and disorganizes their well-being, often leading to a spiral of feelings of uselessness, hopelessness, isolation, and desperation. As humans, we are interdependent beings with the potential to empower others to climb out of this spiral, restoring the marginalized to the larger society.

Occupational apartheid operates intersectionally with other forms of marginalization. The recent spate of tragic killings of African Americans in our country illuminated how opportunities are often not accessible to people of color. Occupations shaped by the powers

that structure society become the standard to which all compare the value and worth of their own occupations. Those outside the dominant culture may have limited access

By walking with others less fortunate, the student is embracing the Jesuit philosophy and spirituality, exemplifying a model of growing awareness.

to the societal-valued occupations through resistance, discouragement, and barriers.

Because they are grounded in a justice-seeking mission, Jesuit colleges and universities are

uniquely equipped to advance a movement to support students who experience occupational injustice and prepare allies to accompany them in their efforts to achieve occupational justice. This begins with awareness through at least some basic interaction within the trenches where marginalized individuals do battle on a daily basis. These experiences include listening to get an inside-out view, walking in solidarity to learn of our fellow humans' plight, and interacting with situations different from our own experience to allow a change in perspective. Jesuit universities have done this well through immersion programs such as alternative breaks, community engagement activities, and semesters of solidarity. Experiencing periods of dissonance ranging from discomfort to recognizing a contradiction to previously held perspectives leads to the transformation of the student.

It should begin by putting the experience of the marginalized people, not their allies, at the center of the discussion. Strong guidance is needed to prevent the fix-it mentality of applying the majority perspective to others, as this promotes a power imbalance. As educators, we must take the time to allow students to process these often emotionally charged conflicts through reflection, to solidify a transformative change in perspective. Reflective practice leads to critical thinking and allows students to consider using their privilege and power to encourage others. A solid program, consisting of structured training and insight from experienced guides will pique the interest of students who might want to bring more harmony among humanity, thus fulfilling a moral commitment to the Society of Jesus.

Those served by these programs may question student motivations to mingle within the margins rather than remaining as a distant observer. Yet, despite the initial distrust, a student's companionship and concern will prevail and allow authentic engagement. By walking with others less fortunate, the student is embracing



the Jesuit philosophy and spirituality, exemplifying a model of growing awareness.

As Jesuit educators, we facilitate the development of the student as a global citizen, who walks in solidarity and uses power and privilege to eradicate the situations that marginalize our fellow neighbors. Understanding of occupational justice requires one to be political — political in one's awareness of structures and systems, political in how votes are cast, political in promoting the human right to occupations, and political in respecting pluralism. Transformative experiences are immensely powerful and long lasting, creating citizens who show care, concern, and compassion for their fellow world inhabitants.

Justice — and humankind overall — is best served when opportunity is available to and accessible to all, and when success is judged by one's progress and self-improvement, rather than compared to the dominant standard.

Leah S. Dunn is an assistant professor in the Occupational Therapy Department at Xavier University.

Creating a New World With Poor People and Young People

By Fred Kammer, S.J.

The Universal Apostolic Preferences, as their name indicates, do not represent a plan or a checklist. They are simply preferences. “We confirmed that preferences are really what we need,” said Father General Arturo Sosa, S.J. “Not priorities, in the sense that priorities exclude. When you prioritize something you exclude something else. This is not a ‘choosing’ between schools, universities or parishes. Preferences are vital orientations for focusing all of our apostolates in the next 10 years.”

As it turns out, these preferences are also a call to action and a call to conversion — and ultimately, an invitation for faculty and staff at Jesuit institutions to create a new world with poor people and young people.

When he introduced the second preference — “To walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission

of reconciliation and justice” — Fr. Sosa said this:

Sent as companions in a mission of reconciliation and justice, we resolve to walk with individuals and communities that are vulnerable, excluded, marginalized, and humanly impoverished. We commit ourselves to walk with the victims of abuse of power, abuse of conscience, and sexual abuse; with the outcasts of this world; with all those whom the biblical tradition knows as the poor of the earth, to whose cry the Lord responds with his liberating incarnation.

This commitment to action and conversion by walking with the “least among us” is rooted in the scriptures and the famous declaration of Vatican II that “the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the

Begin With These Questions

As we look both to a suffering world around us and to a hopeful future, I suggest that those of us who occupy positions of responsibility in Jesuit higher education ask ourselves these questions:

- Have we truly listened to the hopeful aspirations and deepest desires of our students?
- Have we committed ourselves to work for and with young people as they discern solutions to the world’s problems?
- Have we resolved to support young people in walking with the vulnerable, excluded, marginalized, and humanly impoverished?
- Have we spent adequate time discerning who are the most vulnerable and excluded persons and communities as we seek to find ways to walk closely beside them?
- Have we ourselves sufficiently engaged in walking with the victims of abuse of power, abuse of conscience, and sexual abuse, with migrants, displaced persons, refugees, indigenous peoples, and victims of wars and human trafficking?
- If we’re Catholic, have we committed ourselves to help eliminate abuses inside the church and to making it a hopeful home for the young?

joys and hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the followers of Christ.” Likewise, it is grounded in the 1971 Synod on Justice’s assertion that “action for justice [is] a constitutive element of the preaching of the gospel.”

Following these leads, the past five General Congregations of the Society of Jesus, held between 1974 and 2016, set determined and evolving directions for advancing the preferential love of the poor and vulnerable and for transforming social, economic, cultural, religious, and political systems and structures.

And of course, those historic concerns are now intensified and given new meaning today as COVID-19 ravages people on the margins and Black Lives Matter highlights sharp inequalities and galvanizes action in the United States and across the world.

Introducing the third preference — “To accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future” — Fr. Sosa highlighted the key link connecting poor people and young people:

The poor and the young are a complementary and interwoven locus theologicus. Young people, most of whom are poor, face enormous challenges in our world today, including reduced job opportunities, economic instability, increased political violence, multiple forms of discrimination, progressive degradation of the environment, and other ills, all of which make

it difficult for them to find meaning in their lives and to draw closer to God.

It seems crucial to note the vital passions and aspirations of many of our students (not all of whom, of course, are poor): racial justice, quality health care for all, ending economic disparities, dismantling the prison industrial complex, and enabling people everywhere to become, as Pope Paul VI once suggested, “artisans of their own destiny.”

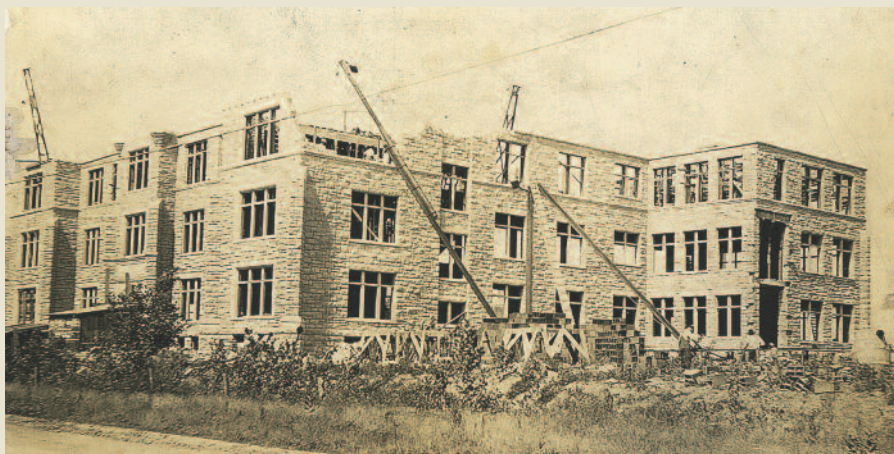
As we acknowledge young people’s concerns, Fr. Sosa notes that it also becomes evident that the job of those elders who seek to accompany young people is to help “show them the way to God that passes through solidarity with human beings and the construction of a more just world.” Put differently, when it comes to accompanying young people, our role is to be receptive to youthful creativity, providing spaces for encountering God and discerning ways to find meaning and achieve happiness by contributing to human well-being, broadly conceived.

According to Fr. Sosa, this requires from faculty and staff at Jesuit institutions an “authenticity of life, spiritual depth, and openness to sharing the life-mission that gives meaning to who we are and what we do.”

Fred Kammer, S.J., is director of the Jesuit Social Research Institute at Loyola University of New Orleans.



Photos courtesy of Loyola University of New Orleans.



In Serving Its Community, Rockhurst University's Past Mirrors Its Future

By Tim Linn

One of the most prominent features of the Rockhurst University campus is its central bell tower.

The tower, completed in 2000, stands tall, capped with a cross. Carved on one side of its base is an excerpt from an address by Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., former superior general of the Society of Jesus — words that speak to the mission of Jesuit institutions to inspire tomorrow's leaders to serve where they are needed and to grapple with the complexities of the world. On the other side are the words "Learning, Leadership and Service in the Jesuit Tradition."

Those messages have powered the Rockhurst experience for 110 years, since the Rev. Michael Dowling, S.J., was awarded a charter for a Jesuit college on land then near Kansas City's southern end. As times have changed and Kansas City has grown, so has the University, adapting to the challenges of the local and global community in the spirit of *magis* — the pursuit of the greater good.

On Sept. 15, 1914, Rockhurst College's doors opened at Sedgwick Hall, the first building on campus, for what at first were high school courses. The outlook was uncertain as the day was

ushered in by torrential storms that led faculty to wonder if any students would show up at all. They did. College courses were added in 1917, the first graduates earning degrees in 1921.

The institution's early students came largely from working-class Irish families in the area — most of them the first members of their family to pursue higher education. Their Rockhurst experience included the Jesuit grounding in Latin, philosophy and theology, but, due to the efforts of forward-thinking leaders, also emphasized then-"modern" subjects such as chemistry, English literature and history.

From the mid-1920s through the 1930s, despite the Great Depression, Rockhurst expanded quickly. During that decade, enrollment grew to include the first out-of-state students and, in 1933, the school launched its evening division to provide educational opportunities for working adults. The University also saw the construction of two still-standing pillars of campus life — Conway Hall and Mason-Halpin Fieldhouse.

Continuing to adapt through the postwar period, Rockhurst welcomed new students, new programs and a new campus landscape. Recognizing the need to understand the dynamics of the workplace amid the rise of organized labor, Rockhurst faculty launched the nationally recognized Institute for Social Order in 1939, providing educational certificates for working men and women. And just as



Rockhurst served as a stepping stone for members of the Irish working class early in its history, the GI Bill opened the doors for veterans returning from World War II to train for their future careers, which for Rockhurst required the nimble construction of family-friendly housing on campus and the founding of new programs including, in 1946, the establishment of one of the first schools of management among U.S. Jesuit schools.

The arrival of the Rev. Maurice Van Ackeren, S.J., the University's ninth president, in 1951 would mark the beginning of a period of sustained growth for Rockhurst, both in the physical footprint of campus and as an influence in Kansas City. During his 26-year tenure, Fr. Van Ackeren helped transform the physical campus with the construction of numerous academic, administrative and residence halls. Throughout this time, the University also built new traditions, such as the annual Rockhurst Day celebration, and hosted many luminaries, including then-Sen. John F. Kennedy, former President Harry S. Truman and famed poet Robert Frost.

Like much of the country, the 1960s would be a time of change for Rockhurst. With the Second Vatican Council came modernization measures to liturgy and student life. When it came to the



civil rights movement, Rockhurst students heeded the call to be “in the city for good,” going door-to-door in support of a municipal public accommodations ordinance. The University closed the decade with perhaps the biggest change, announcing it would become a coeducational institution.

As the 20th Century continued, Rockhurst responded to emerging trends and the needs of the future. Listening to the needs of local businesses, in 1978 the University began an executive MBA program to train tomorrow's top leaders. In 1979, recognizing the need for health care providers, the Uni-

versity established a partnership with Research College of Nursing to offer a Bachelor of Science in nursing degree. And in 1983, Rockhurst established its physical and occupational therapy programs — programs that continue to be among the most popular graduate school destinations. In 1998, recognizing the strides that had been made in becoming a comprehensive institution — and to reflect what the official charter had indicated since 1951 — Rockhurst College became Rockhurst University.

Since celebrating its centennial in 2010, Rockhurst University has continued to pursue the greater good. Responding to the growing need for healthcare professionals regionally and nationwide, 2020 saw the acquisition of Saint Luke's College of Health Sciences, a new academic unit to be housed in a renovated Sedgwick Hall. The addition of Saint Luke's College of Health Sciences not only secures the future of the University's Bachelor of Science in nursing program, but through the addition of associate programs and expanded online graduate offerings, will increase access to a high-quality, Jesuit education for working adults and other nontraditional college students.

Tim Linn is assistant director of University Relations for Rockhurst University.



Photos courtesy of Rockhurst University.

Accompanying Youth in Hope

In Conversation

Expanding the Circle of Compassion by Extending the Margins

Gregory Boyle, S.J., is the founder of Homeboy Industries, the largest gang intervention program in the world. Jesuit in formation Lucas Sharma, S.J., sat down with him to talk about the third Universal Apostolic Preference: Accompanying youth in a hope-filled future.

Lucas Sharma: Greg, you have been accompanying young people toward a hope-filled future in your ministry at Homeboy Industries since the 1980s. How have things changed over the years?

Greg Boyle: In those days, gang members lived in their territory. Now it is kind of a commuter reality. There were eight gangs in the neighborhood; today there are two. So the complexion and demographics have changed. And you know, I think you could make the case that it's not as daunting for young people as it was 30 years ago, for sure. So that's changed. But you still have despondent kids and you still have traumatized kids and you still have mental illness.

LS: What do you find young people need most?

GB: Teenagers need things that folks who've done 30 years in prison may not need. Many who come out of prison are less of a stranger to them-



selves. There's a guy who works at our place, Eugene – he did 30 years and he really knows himself and he's done the work.

But, you know, kids can't even get near themselves. They cling to their gang allegiance because they don't know that no hopeful kid has ever joined a gang. They don't know that they don't even have hope.

At Homeboy, there is a culture of an "older brother/younger brother," you know, where these older guys can put their arm around somebody and say, "hey, you know, we don't do that here," and the younger brother listens to them. This is because it's not about surviving as the fittest but thriving as the nurtured. If it's true enough that a traumatized person will traumatize others, it's also true that a cherished person will find their way to the joy.



LS: How does that happen at Homeboy?

GB: At Homeboy, there's content and there's context. As a society, we really embrace content. We think all Homies need to know more, and so we must train them. That is the American mindset. The secret sauce of Homeboy is that it's context

driven. It's the culture of kinship that heals at Homeboy.

There's a guy named Sammy, who is from one gang, and he sees this little kid, you know, he's 15 who's joined us, named Frankie. Well, Frankie knows who Sammy is because Frankie was the best friend of Sammy's son, they grew up together, used to have sleepovers at the house. But now they're enemies from two different enemy gangs. Sammy is way older and went to prison. Frankie won't even talk to him. It was so hurtful to Sammy, because he knew him since he was a little kid, right. In fact, he was tearful about it. One staff member thought we needed to iron it all out. But another said, "no, the culture will heal it." In fact, that has happened.

That's the difference between content and context. One says let's give information (content) and the other says let's leave it



alone and watch what happens (context). We don't start with the thought that folks are deficient or not well trained or not smart enough. We start with a context, a community of tenderness and kinship. That's the secret sauce.

LS: Talk more about that "secret sauce."

GB: Well it works on lots of levels. But what if we were to not demonize anybody or see anybody as disposable? And what if we invested in people rather than try to incarcerate our way out?

There's enemies who used to shoot at each other, now baking bread together. The idea is to transform pain so as to not inflict it on others. You know if you're a stranger to yourself. If you haven't made friends with

your own wounds, you're going to despise the wounded. And that happens all the time. You know, so you want to be able to

Gangs are still the places youth go to when they've encountered their life as a misery.

make sure that everybody's doing their work.

Before the pandemic, you know, when I'd be on the road, and I'd have homies and I take them to give talks, you could always tell who's the stranger to themselves and who isn't. You know, I remember there was a home girl who told her story five times. Each time it was different. But once we're at a retreat and she

really told her story. It was unrecognizable from the other five and so painful to imagine. You want people to make friends

with who they are, their wounds, and their pain. Otherwise, that will show unhealthily in how they deal with people.

LS: College students are dealing with these same

questions of self and identity. Can you comment on what you've noticed speaking to university students over the past years?

GB: An intriguing thing that I've noticed over the past five years is what I call privilege paralysis: Our university students are aware of white privilege and other privilege which is good. However, 20 years ago on campuses, students wanted to respond out of the Prayer for Generosity, to go make a difference. My caveat is you don't go to the margins to make a difference; you go to the margins so the folks at the margins make you different. But you still go to the margins. Today, privilege paralysis says "I don't even dare go to the margins because it is an insult to the people at the margins." What it does is it keeps you from doing anything. It's like throwing the baby out with the bathwater: I acknowledge my privilege and therefore I won't get near you.



LS: Privilege paralysis sounds like the opposite of the radical kinship you talk about.

GB: My idea is that you expand the circle of compassion so that nobody is standing outside the circle. I was told once that my notion about going to the margins was a racist idea by a university professor because she thought I was trying to bring people back to the center. To whiteness. That is not my idea at all. You go to the margins so that you stay at the margins. You don't bring people back; it's not about assimilation. That's what the third Universal Apostolic Preference is about.

LS: How do we break out of the paralysis?

GB: You face your privilege rather than be tentative about doing anything. It's good to be aware of privilege; it's equally good to catch yourself becoming stuck in it.

LS: I think it's easy to become paralyzed by your privilege, but for privileged people to really accompany the excluded re-



quires a spiritual and intellectual depth that can help them break out of paralysis.

GB: The other piece of it is that it focuses on your identity. If you go to the margins to make a dif-

What if we were to not demonize anybody or see anybody as disposable?

ference, then it's about you. And it can't be about you. That's a radical shift. I recall a woman who worked with refugees who

stopped because she said it was too hard. But then she said there were moments of joy. What I realized was, she wasn't talking about joy but success. One model is about fixing and rescuing people at the margins. People who do that will burn out and won't access joy. It's never about your contribution.

I walked into a high school and the teacher asked me to tell the students how they can make their mark on the world. I said, "No I would never do that. I might tell

them how if they go to the margins." You know, the folks at the margins make a mark on you.

LS: Rather than thinking about our fame, it sounds like you're inviting us to be like Jesus – offering hope means journeying and suffering the consequences that come with choosing joy over worldly success.

GB: Right, exactly right. And it feels so passive, but it's not passive: you enter into exquisite mutuality with the folks at the margins by allowing yourself to

be reached by them and your heart to be altered.

LS: We live in “interesting times.” How has the coronavirus changed your ministry?

kinship when so many constraints have been placed on Homeboy by the virus?

GB Well, you know, you do the best you can. Oddly enough, staff members are probably more

certain times of COVID and racial tensions and privilege paralysis?

GB: I’m not big on advice because it sort of stays in your head. Advice is a blueprint. If you wait to get the perfect amount of advice, you won’t dive in. I think you need to just leap. That is what mysticism is: It’s diving in full speed ahead head-first and truly seeing. You cannot do that from a distance. It’s the relationship that heals and the goal is relational wholeness.



Photos courtesy of Homeboy Industries.

BG: COVID didn’t alter my plans; it torpedoed my identity – dragging suitcases through an airport to give talks with homies and saying mass at detention facilities. All bets are off. Having said that, you find a way to reach people every day constantly via text and talking through Zoom. Now I have a tent I sit in in the parking lot. I can meet people there in the tent.

LS: How do people experience the culture of tenderness and

connected to their caseload now because they’re reaching out to people more. Now, it’s harder to kind of fall through the cracks. So, you know, a lot of classes and in 12-step programs via Zoom. We just found a kind of a new mode. It’s not as personally satisfying and it’s a weird reality, but it works.

LS: What advice might you offer young people – whether at Homeboy or at our universities – during these strange and un-

I have so many experiences of that in my life with homies. After 30 years, someone comes back to see me and reminds me of a time I saw him in juvenile hall saying, “I’ll never forget what you said to me that day.” I’m always curious. Okay. Fire away. “I’ll never forget the advice you gave me.” He says something I didn’t say because I didn’t think it.

What he’s really recalling maybe was what the relationship felt like. Now that’s genuine. I think they’re trying to put to words what it felt like and that makes sense to me. It’s the relationship that heals and the goal is relational wholeness.

Lucas Sharma, S.J., is a Jesuit in Formation with the Jesuits West Province. He was the first web and associate editor of Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education and a former lecturer at Seattle University where he now serves as a trustee. Learn more about Homeboy Industries at homeboyindustries.org.

Building A Hope-Filled Future

By Kelly Swan

Over the past four years, I have had the privilege of sharing space with 2,000 young people at the Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice (IFTJ). From my ballroom-centric vantage point as the communications director for the Ignatian Solidarity Network, I am witness each year to the powerful hope that is tangible both on the stage and in the audience as these high school and college students from Jesuit and other Catholic institutions explore the intersections of faith and justice.

Youth are Already Creating Our Hope-Filled Future

In his June 2019 letter to the Society of Jesus, Fr. Arturo Sosa, S.J., explains the third of the 2019-29 Universal Apostolic Preferences by writing “today, young people are the principal protagonists of an anthropologi-

cal transformation that is coming to be through the digital culture of our time, opening humanity to a new historical epoch.”

And indeed they are. Each year, IFTJ is host to a remarkable lineup of young people who are the protagonists of transformation. Utilizing the tools, culture, and signs of our time, these youth enter into the space of IFTJ to share their stories—their work for racial and gender equity, ecological justice, a humane response to the realities of migration, and more. They draw powerful links between their faith, their Jesuit and Catholic education, their lived experiences of both privilege and injustice, and their innovative, bold, and relational ways of working for justice. I walk away each year with the deep knowledge that we are journeying with and accompanying youth, who are creating a hope-filled future.



The Ignatian Family Teach-in for Justice

For 23 years, this network has gathered annually for the Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice—first at the gates of Fort Benning in Georgia, in response to the deaths of the six Jesuits and their companions, killed in 1989 in El Salvador, and now, since 2010, in Washington, D.C., incorporating legislative advocacy as the culmination of IFTJ.

The lives of the Jesuit martyrs have significantly influenced the Jesuit network in the U.S. and beyond. Over the past 31 years, Jesuit institutions, most significantly those serving youth, have redefined what it is to be universities, high schools and parishes in light of the martyrs' lives. These institutions take up the martyrs' work of addressing the long history of inequality and injustice in El Salvador. IFTJ has emerged through this work as a vehicle for convening the network and responding to today's injustices.

Space for Voices, Encounter

"Our works seek to be spaces open to youthful creativity, spaces that both foster an encounter with the God of life revealed by Jesus and deepen the Christian faith of the young," wrote Father Sosa in his letter in-



Photos courtesy of the Ignatian Solidarity Network.

roducing the Universal Apostolic Preferences. "Such spaces should help young people discern the path by which they can achieve happiness by contributing to the well-being of all humankind."

This is what IFTJ strives to be—a space for creativity, for encounter, for discernment, for joy. Each year on the main stage, speakers who have spent lifetimes committed to the Church and to Jesuit education and other works can be heard. But more importantly, space is created for those whose voices have historically been silenced, sidelined, or unwelcome in our Church and our society—those of young people, of people of color, of women and girls, of those not from the privileged set of students who have historically had access to a Jesuit education.

By creating this space, those who attend are better able to encounter stories—from both established advocates and scholars and from their peers—with the power to make their Jesuit education relevant and actionable. From there, they are invited to seize opportunities to build a network and engage in transformation that leads them on the path to using their education for the common good—to explore and deepen a faith that is rooted in the world and the realities of God's people.

Discernment

"Youth is the stage of human life when individuals make the fundamental decisions by which they insert themselves into society, seek to give meaning to their existence, and realize their dreams," writes Father Sosa. Truly, the work of IFTJ is to do just this. The transformation for the common good plays out in myriad ways—from the student who finds meaning as an advocate and ally, to the student who is empowered to work for the liberation of their own community. At every point on this spectrum, holding space for the voices that will challenge, animate, and humanize issues of public policy, history, or rhetoric is essential to the process of discernment that will deepen the hope-filled future that our youth are already actively creating.

Kelly Swan is communications director for the Ignatian Solidarity Network.

One Path of Accompanying the Young

By Eileen Burke-Sullivan

The third Apostolic Preference, that of accompanying the young in creating a hope-filled future, would seem at first glance to be most firmly in the wheelhouse of Jesuit education, one could even say the entire point of Jesuit universities, colleges, institutes and primary schools all over the world. But for any Jesuit college or university in the United States, a careful reading of the rationale for this discerned preference is necessary. It provides insight toward a clearer understanding of how countercultural it requires our institutions to become.

Accompanying is not precisely the same as “mentoring” or “teaching” or “serving” – although the process shares practices with all these relational behaviors. Again, Father Sosa points out that accompanying young people demands of us a profound commitment to the hopes and values of our Catholic and Jesuit identity – “authenticity of life, spiritual depth and openness to sharing the life mission that gives meaning to who we are and what we do” – and implies a way of looking at life that sees all existence in the light of a loving Creator who calls us into a relationship that Greg Boyle, S.J., calls “kinship.” Accompanying is rooted in knowing ourselves as those who have been and are still being accompanied even into stages of mature adulthood. We give to others what we have received.

Among many initiatives and programs at Creighton University that seek to practice genuine accompaniment is our Student Support Services Program. SSS, as it is known, is embedded in a larger academic support system called Creighton EDGE that provides personal formation for discerning about, and actively preparing for, various professional ca-

reers. The SSS is one of many programs hosted by the EDGE that are designed to meaningfully accompany students throughout their Creighton years.

SSS specifically serves first-generation college students and students with physical disabilities. It asserts that its programmatic mission is “to surround students with a network of support, giving them the confidence and skills to succeed at Creighton and achieve in life.” The program is funded by a competitive federal grant program from which Creighton and seven other U.S. Jesuit Universities have successfully secured federal dollars to fund the various gaps encountered by students who qualify. SSS works closely with the Creighton Intercultural Office, Counseling Services, the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice and Campus Ministry Interfaith Core Team, along with various other campus structures organized to provide one-to-one accompaniment throughout the undergraduate years. These partner groups provide opportunities for SSS students to explore the faith vision they may identify with, to develop skills for personal discernment, and to discover opportunities for sharing their wisdom and heritage with others in both the Creighton community, and the larger communities that make up our “global neighborhood.”

In his letter announcing the Universal Apostolic Preferences, Father Arturo Sosa, S.J., points out that most young people in the world are poor, facing enormous challenges of reduced job opportunities, economic instability, political violence, discrimination, and degradation of the environment. The reality is that most of the world’s population fits the description of “young” – nearly two-thirds are under

30 years of age – and huge numbers of this portion of the world’s people live at the margins of political power, community, and skill or knowledge-based education. In country after country, the access to basic human rights, education, or financial empowerment is limited by embedded systems that stratify human value based on race, ethnicity, religious faith or other dimensions of inter-human relationship. This systemic stratification is so firmly grounded in modern social and political systems that to question it is to invite persecution, imprisonment or death.

One effort to overcome such systems in post-modernity is the market-driven vision of cultural homogeneity. This effort to deny diversity and to form the next generation into a group that talks, thinks, speaks, acts – and purchases – creates a kind of mindless uniformity that purports to strive toward equity by suppressing the unique gifts of diverse human persons. Catholic Social Teaching affirms another route, however, one that sees an intercultural human society that respects and is enriched by diversity grounded in interior freedom. Father Sosa points out that young people “aspire to diversity that corresponds to the exercise of true freedom and

opens creative spaces.” With such a base, young adults develop a future of health and hope for themselves, their families and for the created world.

SSS and its partners’ structures emphasize that confidence to succeed at Creighton is not about “fitting in” to a pre-set, homogeneous culture. Rather it is about flourishing as the unique person each one is while inviting others at Creighton to see the whole as a community that is growing in its appreciation of a united vision of hope that encompasses a communion of diversity.

As we look across the work of our Jesuit colleges and universities, it is imperative that we continue to identify concrete actions and programs that contribute to a more humane intercultural society in our curricular and co-curricular planning as well as in the attitudes and values we proclaim. Part of this search is not only within our own community boundaries, but in the network of Jesuit schools and works that we are part of regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Eileen Burke-Sullivan is vice provost for mission and ministry at Creighton University.



Photo courtesy of Creighton University.

Students' Hopes Feed Those Who Accompany Them as Well

By Steve Katsouros, S.J.

"I'd rather be called 'poor.'"

That was the reaction of Louisa, a student at Arrupe College of Loyola University Chicago and a member of the first cohort of students who enrolled at Arrupe in 2015.

In the summer of 2017, Louisa defied the statistics. Nationally, urban junior colleges report a two-year graduation rate of 7%. Louisa and her classmates were completing their associate's degrees at nine times higher than the national average; 89% of the graduates enrolled in four-year institutions, and 75% of the graduates completed their bachelor's in five years or less, compared to the national average of two-year institutions at 14% of bachelor's attainment in six years.

"Yes, Father K, I'd rather be called 'poor,'" Louisa repeated. She was reacting to the title of an article about Arrupe's first graduation in Chicago's newspaper of record, *The Tribune*. The title of the article: "Loyola program opens door for vulnerable students."

"I'm not vulnerable," said Yessica, Louisa's classmate, who was transferring to University of Wisconsin, Madison, after graduating from Arrupe.

"Bad choice of words," said Khalid, who was continuing at Georgetown.

"Agreed," said Dante, who planned to leverage his Arrupe associate's degree in the workforce by enrolling in Year Up, a job training program, after our graduation.

When I arrived at Arrupe College to launch this new academic unit at Loyola University Chicago in the fall of 2014, my responsibilities included designing an interview protocol for students wanting to join the program. The protocol would be an important

part of our first class. Influenced by the work of psychologist Angela Duckworth, I wanted to assess grit and persistence. Consequently, prospective students were asked, "Describe an obstacle you have faced. What did you do about it? Did anyone help you? What have you learned because of the obstacle? What would you do differently?" Overall, the interviews worked, and we enrolled 159 students in our first cohort, including Louisa and Yessica, Khalid and Dante.

Yet in retrospect, the interview protocol presumed that, of course, First-Generation students who are either Pell eligible or undocumented must have faced obstacles. This was similar to lumping our students into the general category of "vulnerable."

Education scholar Jackie Gerstein terms this the "deficit narrative" — viewing another through the lens of what is needed, of being vulnerable, of experiencing obstacles. Gerstein encourages us to consider the "asset narrative" — what are the talents, the gifts, the experiences our students bring to Arrupe and to Jesuit higher education?

So we changed the interview protocol. We dropped the question about obstacles. Interviewers now say to prospective students: "Arrupe has a wonderful, supportive community. From reading your application essay, and from what your high school counselor tells us and your recommendations indicate, we believe you can contribute to our community, our community will be better because of you. Can you talk about a talent or strength you think you have?"

My colleagues and I consider our students to be fellow pioneers in creating and establishing Arrupe. Professors and staff ask students, "What are your in-

**Fall in love, stay in love,
and it will decide everything.**

terests? What are your goals with this degree? What are you curious about?" Their responses have shaped our curriculum decisions and informed how we deliver courses and support services. I attribute much of the success we have seen at Arrupe to our students and graduates, their influence and feedback.

As I reflect on the third of the Universal Apostolic Preferences — Accompanying the Young in Hope — I think of how students and faculty, administrators and alumni, board members and the larger Loyola Chicago community accompany each other. Of course, we attract students who benefit from Arrupe's affordability. As one student said, "I came to Arrupe for the affordability, but I stay at Arrupe for the community and the opportunity." The opportunity has been a two-way street, as my colleagues, I and Loyola University have all learned from Arrupe students how to offer a high-quality liberal arts program with many support services at a lower cost to students who are too often underrepresented on our campuses. We accompany each other, and I am more hopeful for

higher education because of Arrupe students.

I have introduced Fr. Arrupe to new students through the "Nothing is more practical" reflection generally attributed to him:

Nothing is more practical than finding God,
than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way
What you are in love with,
What seizes your imagination, will affect everything.
It will decide what will get you
out of bed in the morning,
What you do with your evenings,
How you spend your weekends,
What you read, whom you know,
What breaks your heart, and what amazes you
with joy and gratitude.
Fall in love, stay in love,
And it will decide everything.

Two years later, at commencement, I remind our new graduates of those words, turning the message on them. "You have seized our imaginations," I tell them. "You have affected everything...you amaze us with joy and gratitude." When I look at our graduates — or imagine looking at them this year, as I deliver my remarks via Zoom — I don't see vulnerable people burdened with obstacles. Rather, I think how much I have learned by accompanying them during their first postsecondary educational experience, and how much Jesuit higher education has to learn from their assets and their achievements.

Steve Katsouros, S.J., founded Arrupe College at Loyola University Chicago. He is now the president/CEO of the Come to Believe Network, tasked to scale the Arrupe College model on campuses nationally.



Photo by Lukas Keapproth, Loyola University Chicago.

Evangelized by the Nones

By Andrew Omandi

Ardh Junub al-Sudan, South Sudan: The place where I encountered my first Nones.

It was mid-August when our tiny plane finally touched down on the dusty runway, safe and sound. The dry humid heat wave and strong cow-dung smell that is typical, even at the airport, hit me in a familiar way. There wasn't much I could do about it other than to accept the smell creeping into my nostrils and down into my lungs as I quickly re-adapted to this environment where, once before, I had learned to accept other unpleasant things.

This was the place where, for three years, I had lived, taught, called my second home. And most of all, despite the fact that I was supposed to be the teacher, this was where I learned hard, humbling lessons from people without religious affiliation, often called Nones. It was here that they demonstrated to me that in difference there could be unity, love, and care, that people could thrive together despite variance in beliefs and dogmas and theological understandings.

I was now returning to this wonderful place. A return very different indeed from my initial arrival.

Like any other person sent to the missions for that first time, I had arrived with enthusiasm, plans, ideas. But it wasn't until I was on the ground that I came to realize the difference between ideas and realities. Predictably, I failed — failed flat! — in all those things I'd imagined. But learning to listen and taking in all the other bitter lessons imparted by my young teachers was actually what I needed most.

So, this second arrival represented a pleasant return — an opportunity, after much reflection, to thank these young people who stuck by me and worked extra hard every day to help me learn.

So, what did the Nones teach me?

What was I thankful for?

Above all, they taught me to listen. To listen to the Spirit and believe that this same Spirit blows and communicates through other people. They also taught me to stop haranguing people about the idea of God and instead live a reality that could enable them and me together to draw forth God's love and generosity between us, among us — despite the differing ideas about God we may have. They taught me, further, to look for God's presence not only in the expected places where I already knew God would be, but also in the goodness that they themselves embodied.

Looking back, I can say confidently that my early failures were the result of my own blindness to that goodness. My view of the "church" and of my relationship to it as a missionary led me to see myself with pride and view them with contempt. So, I first rejected their helping hand. I blocked any avenue to dialogue. And I ended up harvesting great failures.

In their December 2019 visit to meet with Pope



Francis, a group of the U.S. bishops asked him about how to engage with Nones. He responded by telling his own faith story, emphasizing how his own heart was won through the commitment of others — commitment to doing good, commitment to the gospel, yes; but above all commitment to being present, especially even when things seemed tough and unpredictable.

This was another thing I learned from the Nones in Ardh Junub al-Sudan. I had fallen into the trap of thinking that the people who kneel and sing and pray the loudest are the only ones you can rely on. But I came to see that the true commitment of these young people made the mission take a different form, making it shine with their presence, whether through rebuilt houses for the poor or boring holes for community water. Jesus reminds us that “not all who say ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of God,” and these young people remind us, I think, that the kingdom of God comes about only when we commit ourselves to lives of presence, through thick and thin.

I know that God likes to be noticed. And I guess that is why Igbo gods like the Amadioha will come in thunder and lightning to make their presence known. But, the reality is that God works more subtly, more slowly, and so noticing requires more attention, more patience.

“I had fallen into the trap of thinking that the people who kneel and sing and pray the loudest are the only ones you can rely on.”

When I was a young boy growing up on the shores of Lake Victoria in Kenya, after we got ready to go to bed, my grandma would call all of us grandchildren over to the fireplace for a story. But she would always insist that we each come with a short stick with which to beat the ground whenever she would interrupt her story, which she did frequently. It was not until I was an adult that I grasped what she was doing. The beating was to keep us awake and alert, to stop us from drifting off and falling into the fire! In her wisdom she had to devise a method of keeping us awake and focused.

Sometimes in my contemplation I think that perhaps, this is the way God has dealt with us, Her children. God, like my grandma, keeps revealing the mysteries of this world to us while asking us to do only this: Be present! Pay attention! Listen to each other! For the Spirit resides in every person, and most certainly in the Nones!

And this was the greatest lesson those wonderful Nones of South Sudan taught to me.

Andrew Omandi is assistant chaplain at the College of the Holy Cross.



Photos courtesy of Andrew Omandi, College of the Holy Cross.

Small Actions Can Kindle Hope

By Norm Townsel

Much of the reading list I give my students is designed to expose them to voices — current and past — of people committed to achieving social justice. But occasionally, I share a personal story that I believe illustrates how hope can be given by even the smallest acts.

Our television was a black and white model, sitting on four wooden legs, in an upstairs bedroom that had been converted into a TV room by my dad. It would, within a year or two, become the bedroom for my baby sister, the third and final child in our clan. However, on that night, I was there alone watching TV and doing other things of interest to an 8-year-old boy. I do not know, now that I look back, why I was in that room alone that evening. As I remember, it was the place where I spent the most time alone with my dad, usually in the evenings. It was in this room that he taught me how to shine my Sunday shoes and how to tie a tie. It was where I learned his laugh, his sense of humor, and his love of sports. It was April 4, 1968, and here today, in 2021, it is a vague and sketchy memory. Yet, I clearly remember at some point the voice on the television saying that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had been shot. As I processed what I had just heard, I also knew that this was something my parents would want to know. I remember running down the stairs and finding my mother first. I remember the look of shock and fear that registered on her face. I will never forget how vulnerable and frightened her reaction made me feel. I have felt that feeling many times since, but this was my introduction to just how cruel the world could be. Now, when I hear or see unfettered evil befall the likes of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Botham Jean, Philando Castille, Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Samuel Dubose, John Crawford, Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin, and many, many more, I feel the same way.

I remember that my father, a local minister and civil rights activist, spent a long time on the phone

that evening, and then left the house. I do not remember seeing him again that night. At some point in the evening, my mother took me outside and we sat together on the front porch watching the activity in the street. I did not have the words for it at the time, but as I look back, what we were watching together was a riot. I clearly remember that the look of fear that had been on my mother's face a few hours before, was now completely gone.



I would not say that she was angry. That face would have frightened me as well. I would say, instead, that a look and air of determination had replaced her initial shock, and her attitude gave me comfort. I do not know if we were sitting there making sure that nothing untoward happened to our home, or if my father was somewhere close by and she had brought me along to wait for him. I only know that the events of the evening left a mark on my soul that I feel to this day.

In the days to come, my classmates, who were 99.9% Black, as well as the teachers in the elementary

school that I attended, were all affected. Three years earlier, my father had led a strike of the school system asking that the district open its hiring policies and begin to place qualified Black teachers in the schools. As a result, over 50% of the teachers I had from kindergarten through sixth grade were Black. We all felt that the murder of Dr. King was an assault on our very existence. The impact of having Black teachers help us process these emotions, while staying on task with our education, was immense. As I reflect, much of the influence those teachers had on me and my fellow classmates came not so much from what they said, but from them quietly modeling the same determination and resolve that my parents did on that fateful night.

Many years later, I came to know a man who shared a story with me about the night of Dr. King's murder. He told me that he was out that night, throwing bottles, bricks, and breaking the windows

of businesses in our community that were owned by Whites who lived elsewhere. He told me that one of the White owners had come to his business that night, brandishing a weapon, trying to protect his property. He told me that a large confrontation ensued, with the crowd growing increasingly unruly and police on the scene. He said to me that my father stopped him that night from doing something that he would probably have been very sorry for later. I asked him what he had been planning to do and he did not answer, just shook his head.

I asked him, "What did my father do?" He replied, "He just showed me he loved me." I am not sure how to teach students to be resolute. What I am sure of is we must continue to try because that work is not done, and our students need people who love them.

Norm Townsel is clinical coordinator for counselor education in Xavier University's Department of Counseling.

Consistency, Community, Hope

By Karen Adkins

I am sitting in front of my computer screen and consistently tearing up as I look at my students' work. Normally, I am not a crier, and while online teaching frustrates me, it has yet to reduce me to tears. So, why am I crying?

I suppose I am crying because I am moved by my students' attestations to their experience of hope within the context of a consistent community. I suppose I am crying because I realize that, frankly, my students consistently give me so much hope.

I teach in Regis University's En Route program, supervising a seminar of first-year students for a fall writing course and a spring philosophy course, enhanced and informed by students' yearlong commitment of weekly service at a single community site. Students end their year making presentations, modeled on the NPR series *This I Believe*, where they tell a story from their service experience and reflect on how it reinforced, complicated, or challenged a core belief

of theirs. Students normally present first to the class, then at a culminating event with community and campus members.

These presentations are always meaningful for the students to prepare and for the rest of us to experience. But the pandemic threw a wrench into our plans in spring 2020; students had started brainstorming and drafting a mere two weeks before we closed our campus. At our first Zoom session, I gave them the option of simply not doing the project. But I was secretly delighted when they chose to continue, since working with them as they draft, revise, and submit is generally my favorite part of the year. When the time came, we circulated their work to everyone in the class before our final Zoom session so we could in some way replicate our customary culminating discussion.

Common themes often emerge in presentations. One year, many students described moments of being shamed in their service work and how those mo-



ments inhibit standing with and for others. This year, the major theme was the value of consistency — how hard it was to establish relationships with small, sometimes judgmental kids in after-school programs, and how hard it was to keep showing up and feeling like the work mattered. One toddler screamed in terror whenever a student tried to work with her; another student was mocked by her reading partner for her lack of dinosaur knowledge; a third got a little too competitive with Connect 4. One student worked at a site in the community in which she'd grown up, giving her a unique experience.

Regardless of their starting points, though, they all noticed how important it was just to keep showing up. They were more effective in their service as they gained competence with communities. The kids they worked with learned to trust them. They were able to be more useful to the staff at their service site.

And when they reflected on their work, students kept returning to the reality of relationship, as opposed to its myth: Our human connections are built on small, consistent acts of kindness and interdependency, not the grand gestures that are the stuff of pop culture. These students were attesting to the importance of these small moments in their accumulation, as well as in their absence.

Our Zoom sessions themselves certainly reminded me of the value of consistency and community. I was struck by how consistently many of us made our family members part of our Zoom discussions. Several of us regularly had our pets visible on screen during sessions, and one student's baby brother made guest appearances almost every week. One student Zoomed from her kitchen, and I was

moved to watch her dad affectionately caress her head as he passed by. The daily intimacies and trust that we so missed in our service work were ultimately present and appreciated for some students in quarantine, which made me worry all the more about the students whose faces I rarely saw during Zoom sessions.

So, I found myself in tears sitting with these final projects both because students' ideas were sincere and important and because reading their words and hearing their voices reminded me of how much I value and miss being with them, how much I had come to cherish the consistency we provide for each other. I found myself in tears because the particular mission of Jesuit universities, which function to get students to think through their values within the context of sustained engagement in community, seems more important to me than ever in these times, profoundly marked by a pandemic and racism and so much more that can drive us to despair (and tears!) during this time in which we are all seeking sources of hope.

As educators in the Jesuit tradition, we have both the obligation and the opportunity to be with our students (in whatever learning format!) to think with them and work with them to leave our shared part of the world better than we found it.

In the end, I suppose I am crying because I recognize that this is work that truly matters, work that truly gives sustenance and hope.

Karen Adkins is professor of philosophy at Regis University and the author of Gossip, Power, Epistemology: Knowledge Underground (Palgrave, 2017).

In the spirit of reflection, we pose these questions as an opportunity to extend the conversation. We hope that by offering these ideas, the discussion continues on your campus — with colleagues, with students, and with your community.

Ten Questions for Continuing the Conversation

1. Repentance for past wrongs can come in many forms. How does this happen personally and on an institutional level?
2. The authors of many of the pieces in this issue speak of finding hope and meaning in the actions of others. What lessons about faith and humanity have you learned in a place or a way you never expected?
3. Are we having more or fewer tough discussions now than we have in the past? What is the value of trying to understand another side if they are unwilling to try to understand your side?
4. Does your institution do enough to attract and retain underrepresented populations? How are those people celebrated and made a part of the campus family and how is this done in a way that doesn't alienate others?
5. What does your institution do in terms of curriculum, recruitment, student life and development toward the end of antiracism?
6. How do you discuss the various kinds of oppression when those with opposing viewpoints won't even accept the data used to make an argument?
7. Sometimes people have a legitimate blind spot when it comes to seeing difficulties others face every day. Do you have one? How do you work to overcome it and help others overcome theirs?
8. What does "vulnerability" mean to you? Is it a weakness, a strength or both?
9. Service work is often structured on the idea of helping others. But Greg Boyle, S.J., says "you don't go to the margins to make a difference; you go to the margins so the folks at the margins make you different." How are service opportunities or immersion trips structured at your institution, and what are student and faculty expectations of them?
10. Words are such a powerful tool for suppression and for liberation. How have we changed the way we talk to students as faculty and staff and as an institution. How far must we go with inclusive language, and might there a danger of going too far?

We would love to keep the conversation going with your thoughts on these or other topics online at conversationsmagazine.org. Have an idea you would like to see on our website? Email conversamag@gmail.com.

In Conversation: Students Talk About Where They Find Hope

This past summer, *Conversations* brought together a group of students from across the AJCU network on Zoom and asked them how their Jesuit education gives them hope. On these pages are edited responses to that question. For their complete answers, and more questions, please visit conversationsmagazine.org.

What about your Jesuit education gives you hope?

Sumbul Siddiqui: I'm entering my second year at Stritch School of Medicine at Loyola University, Chicago, doing a dual degree in medicine and public health.

I found out I was undocumented during my last year of high school, at a time when nobody knew what the term undocumented meant, at least in Georgia, where I grew up since I was four. I didn't know other people out there like me, because we don't really talk about it. And so, finding out I was undocumented meant, at that time, I couldn't apply for federal financial aid for college, that I couldn't even attend a public university.

I felt hopeless because, throughout high school, I did my best academically, and that really hurt. After I was admitted as an international student at a private college in Georgia, and after DACA started in 2012, things got better. I could have a driver's license, didn't have to worry about getting deported, and could even get a work permit.

But even this didn't change the fact that, when the time came to apply to medical school, there were none that would accept me. They just said, "This is

against our policy." I eventually searched "medical student and DACA," and Stritch Medical School at Loyola University of Chicago popped up. It was the first, the only school then that I could apply to.

And now that I'm here, I feel like I can be myself. They tell you that they know you worked hard to get here. They tell you they were rigorous in the application process and that you are meant to be here. And so, despite everything, I've grown a lot in my confidence.

Caroline Maltese: I go to John Carroll University and study cell molecular biology with a minor in chemistry and also philosophy, hoping to go to medical school.

Jesuit education has allowed me to dive much deeper into the things that I was doing all my life. I always participated in service activities when I was in high school and grade school, and I loved it because it made me happy. But when I got to John Carroll, I was like, "whoa, this is a bigger thing than I thought"—combining service with education.

What gives me hope here is seeing how people accept that service has a deeper meaning, not just helping out every once in a while, doing something that makes you feel good, and then coming back and telling your story—It was a great day!—and then being done with it.

Service is actually not always happy. You have to expose yourself to things that might make you feel really bad, and this gets you thinking about your life—learning that it's not as easy as just going out and working a food drive and then

going to bed feeling good about yourself. So, I get hope from the people I go to school with, and the people that I have as mentors and teachers, because the passion they have for service makes them uncomfortable.

Britt Axelson: I'm from the College of the Holy Cross where I am a theater design major and an environmental studies minor.

I was nervous starting out at Holy Cross just because as a queer person going to a Catholic school, I thought, I don't know how this is going to work out. But it's been a lovely experience, and I've felt so supported, such a strong community here. And it's interesting because I've been at Holy Cross in probably the most difficult couple of years that the community has faced in a long time—hard things to deal with and to talk about. But, every time I have found that the administration, specifically the Chaplains' Office, has been there with so much love and immediate support.

And I have a very tricky relationship with religion because I've seen how it's hurt people I care about. But then I've also seen it be really beautiful and do the things it's meant to do—help people and teach us to love others. So, I feel like I've seen religion exemplified at its best at Holy Cross—just seeing the way that the religious people on campus react to difficult things.

That has given me so much hope because I feel like, specifically as a queer person, you hear so much negative stuff. You hear Catholic and gay, and most people are just like, "How does that go

together?" But we're given a space to develop our spirituality and be safe and be accepted—and there's this amazing support when bad things happen.

In terms of where I get hope, the things that come to mind are *cura personalis*—this idea that we're caring for and really educating all parts of ourselves—and discernment. I see so many people, especially young people, so stressed out. But here Jesuit discernment helps, learning to listen to yourself. Where do you want to go with your life? What do you really want? It's not just, what are you good at and what do you get good grades in? But it's, what do you feel called to do?

Rosalyn Tangi Vargas: I graduated from Loyola Marymount University, and after 15 years in retail store management, I recently started an online graduate program in organizational leadership at Gonzaga University.

My hope comes from how Jesuit education has helped me to look for ways to serve others. As an undergraduate at LMU, there was an abundance of fraternities and clubs, but just as many service organizations. So, service was really in the fabric.

During the long break between my undergraduate years and starting graduate school, working in a management role, I was always trying to serve other employees' needs before mine. But in that environment, service was an afterthought for other leaders. And what I learned was there's a difference between leaders talking about service and acting on service. In terms of hope, it was a real battle for me in my work to see those who did not choose serving others when, internally, all I wanted to do was serve the people I worked with.

And so, when I started attending Gonzaga this past year, what gave me hope was the emphasis on service, and remembering there are other people who also want to put service in the forefront.

When I was in management, I ended up asking: Am I the only one who believes in putting other people's needs first? Don't I really need to help others so they can go on to benefit everyone around them?

Abigail Seipel: I graduated from Rockhurst University in 2019, studying exercise science and Spanish, and now I'm in a physical therapy graduate program in Colorado.

Since I've suffered from impostor syndrome, a very severe self-questioning and uncertainty, what gives me hope having had a Jesuit education is that it's made me feel capable of doing something. Even if I don't always necessarily think I have all the tools I need, or if I'm just feeling insecure, knowing that, because I've been taught and influenced by so many good people and exposed to so many valuable ideas and perspectives, that I do actually have those tools already. All of my professors and all of those experiences in our social justice group, in leading retreats, and performing liturgical music—they've all prepared me, and I have them to remember. And I realize I just have to call them up and continue to use them, so I don't forget.

Another thing I learned at Rockhurst was the importance of stillness and just being. It's something that I really struggle with, because I like to do things, accomplish things. But just being—that's something that I really have to be conscious of in my life and really push myself to remember to do.

Freedom Richardson: I am from Loyola University in New Orleans, a political science major with a minor in criminology and justice, and I am now our student government president.

With all that's been going on in this country, it's been incredibly challenging to find hope. And so, I rely heavily on the passions and the experiences of people here at Loyola New Orleans. I'm Baptist, but I think the Jesuit principles I see here are so

universal, and they influence every aspect of campus life, especially class discussions.

We are so much more about solidarity here than other places—that it's not just a word that we're accustomed to hearing when we're looking for new students. Solidarity means we genuinely target engagement with communities we can be the most effective in. And it's not just a matter of raking leaves or painting benches. We've been really intentional about where we focus our efforts so we make an impact in New Orleans communities hardest hit by crime and lack of opportunity, but also by Hurricane Katrina and its ongoing aftermath.

William Critchley-Menor, S.J.:

I just finished my undergraduate degree at St. Louis University, and I'm staying here for a master's in American studies.

When I think about what gives me hope in Jesuit education, it isn't service or social justice or academics—any of those good things that we do. But I would point to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

My own first encounter with the Exercises was as a 19-year old Jesuit novice, before I came to SLU as an undergraduate. What I found in the Exercises was a great avenue toward God and an encounter with the God who changes people's lives and changes how they look at other people in the world.

I also think about stillness and breath and slowing down and reflecting on what we do. We hear the word *magis* all the time. So often that word is exploited to mean we're going to do great things, and that's not at all what it means. It's really about bringing into all that we do a question about love, about things that move us in the heart and not just the head. It's a question that young people in our generation sometimes forget to ask, but that Jesuit universities continue to pose. And that gives me a lot of hope.

Teaching Racism Begins With the Saying of Names

By Ann Green

**George Floyd • Ahmaud Arbery
Breonna Taylor • Sandra Bland
Michael Brown • Walter Scott
Tamir Rice • Eric Garner • Kalief
Browder • Trayvon Martin
Emmett Louis Till**

I have taught race, writing, and service-learning for more than 20 years. I am white. What we, white faculty and staff and students, must speak about — what we do not speak about often enough — is how “the faith that does justice” can address systemic racism. African-American lesbian feminist Audre Lorde’s often quoted phrase “the master’s tools cannot dismantle the master’s house” stays on my mind when I plan and teach service-learning classes. How can service-learning be a tool that dismantles, smashes, upends systemic racism?

**Rev. Clementa Pinckney
Tywanza Sanders
Rev. Sharonda Singleton
Cynthia Hurd • Ethel Lance
Susie Jackson • Myra Thompson
Rev. Daniel Simmons
Sr. Addie Mae Collins • Denise McNair
Carole Robertson • Cynthia Wesley**

At a Jesuit, Catholic University we are called, as Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., writes, to teach the actual world as it unjustly exists. In service-learning courses, this means addressing racism in real time. In the midst of a global pandemic and the pandemic of racism, in the aftermath of George Floyd and so many others’ murders, we white teachers must teach against white supremacy, and as the theological ethicist Bryan Masingale writes: “understand the difference between being uncomfortable and being threatened.

There is no way to tell the truth about race in this country without white people becoming uncomfortable.”

English professor and peace activist Mary Rose O’Reilley posed a question in *The Peaceable Classroom*: How can we teach English in a way that people stop killing each other? O’Reilley reflected, in part, about how to keep men, college students, out of Vietnam, but her question has shaped my teaching: How can you create space for discussions of race/racism and systemic oppression that don’t reinscribe white supremacy? How can you teach service-learning for racial justice? How do you teach service-learning so white people stop killing Black people?

**Atatiana Jefferson • Aura Rosser
Laquan McDonald • Stephon Clark
Botham Jean • Philando Castille
Alton Sterling • Michelle Cusseaux
Freddie Gray • Oscar Grant
Jimmie Lee Jackson**

White silence about race sends a message about race. As Masingale writes, Amy Cooper knew exactly what she was doing when she called the police on Christopher Cooper, the bird watcher in Central Park, coincidentally on the same day of George Floyd’s murder. The first thing we must do when we teach service-learning is speak about race and racism and white supremacy and white privilege. We must ask students to consider the differences between terms like “racial justice” and “antiracist” not simply as a game of linguistic gymnastics, but to show how language constructs our realities and shapes our thoughts. We must not only hand out reading lists on racial justice or systemic

racism, but teach white people how to talk about race and how to reflect on race and thread race throughout the curriculum as a part of our discussions about justice. And this is more than teaching white people how to use the “correct” language about race; the absence of racial slurs does not mean the absence of racism. We want to move beyond performative antiracism to work toward the deeper structural changes that achieve racial justice.

**John Crawford • Tony McDade
Jonathan Ferrell • Samuel DuBose
Terence Crutcher • Amadou Diallo
Jermame Reid • Sean Bell
Aiyana Jones • John Crawford
Miriam Carey • Timothy Thomas
Michael Stewart**

As a white woman in the United States, I know racism is as American as a parade on the Fourth of July. Racism is baked into the apple pie at the picnic, where were often events at which white Southerners celebrated lynchings. We must shift discussions of race beyond correcting an individual who is not “woke” enough to use the “right” wording to eliminate and overturn the systems that are used to elevate whites and that ultimately kill Black and brown people at disproportionate rates, whether through police violence, COVID-19, or the everyday racism that permeates systems of health care, education, and housing.

We must teach about racism by saying their names.

Ann Green is a professor of English at Saint Joseph’s University. Search the names in this article to read their stories.



At the Jubilee Mass celebrating the Kohima Mission's 50 years, Archbishop James Toppil, Fr. General Arturo Sosa, S.J., and Mission Superior Fr. Melvin Pereira, S.J., receive the offertory gifts of the women. See story page 6.

photograph by Don Doll, S.J.

Georgetown University
Washington, DC, 1789

Saint Louis University
Saint Louis, 1818

Spring Hill College
Mobile, 1830

Xavier University
Cincinnati, 1831

Fordham University
New York, 1841

College of the Holy Cross
Worcester, 1843

Saint Joseph's University
Philadelphia, 1851

Santa Clara University
Santa Clara, 1851

Loyola University Maryland
Baltimore, 1852

University of San Francisco
San Francisco, 1855

Boston College
Boston, 1863

Canisius College
Buffalo, 1870

Loyola University Chicago
Chicago, 1870

Saint Peter's University
Jersey City, 1872

University of Detroit Mercy
Detroit, 1877

Regis University
Denver, 1877

Creighton University
Omaha, 1878

Marquette University
Milwaukee, 1881

John Carroll University
Cleveland, 1886

Gonzaga University
Spokane, 1887

University of Scranton
Scranton, 1888

Seattle University
Seattle, 1891

Rockhurst University
Kansas City, 1910


Loyola Marymount University
Los Angeles, 1911

Loyola University New Orleans
New Orleans, 1912

Fairfield University
Fairfield, 1942

Le Moyne College
Syracuse, 1946

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