

The Jesuit Post

[IFTJ SPECIAL EDITION 11/15/2014]



Ite Inflammate Omnia: Fuel for the Fire

Social media is our normal hangout. Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and YouTube, these are the places you can find The

Jesuit Post preaching, teaching and generally causing havoc. We're there because it's a place where we can share the

gospel and we're here in Washington, DC for the same reason. You are holding in your hands the first-ever printed edition of TJP. It's not just the first-ever print edition. We're excited to include five guest writers, another first for TJP.

This weekend is not an isolated event. If it is we've all failed. The Ignatian Family Teach-In is a starting point, an energizing moment that spurs us all to greater interaction. It's the opposite of Fight Club: what happens at IFTJ doesn't stay at IFTJ, it breaks out and spreads. But it's won't do that on its own. You are the reason it can and will spread. We've put this print edition into your hands to let you know that there is a growing network of readers and writers who want

to talk about the intersection of faith, concern for justice, and daily life. We need you to share what you've seen and heard. My friends and family already know about TJP. They already read and share content that makes them think about life just a little bit more deeply. They share and discuss about a faith that does justice. But we need to reach your friends and family. They probably don't know who I am and probably don't care what I think ... I don't blame them. But they do care what you think, they do want to hear about you. If you find something on TJP or hear something this weekend that resonates with you, share it.

Legend has it that when St. Ignatius Loyola missioned his best friend and fellow Jesuit

St. Francis Xavier to India, he knew that he was not likely to see him again. As Ignatius sent Xavier off to this new mission, he told him, "Ite Inflammate Omnia": *Go and set the world on fire*. You have a similar mission. Light up Twitter (#IFTJ14). Fill up the Facebook Feeds. Share your faith and your zeal for justice with your friends and family. We need you to set the world on fire. If you need to, feel free to use this newspaper as kindling. Don't worry; the PDF is already online!

Eric Sundrup, SJ

is a native of Cincinnati, OH and recent graduate of the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley. He currently works in Catholic Campus Ministry at the University of Michigan through St. Mary's Student Parish. He enjoys running and creating new projects that take up all of his free time.



Ignatian Solidarity Network

Dirty, Bruised, and Broken: The Call for a Missionary Church

This weekend as we come together to honor the 25th anniversary of the martyrdom of the six Jesuits and their two lay colleagues in El Salvador, we give a great testimony about what it means to be the missionary Church that Jesus longs for us to be: a Church on the margins, a poor Church that is for the poor, a Church that heals wounds and warms hearts, a Church that is always a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven.

Today, another Jesuit comes to mind when we think about the idea of a missionary Church: Pope Francis, the Bishop of Rome. Francis tells us that we are to be today's missionary disciples of the Lord Jesus.

Our world's pain is real, but this good news can change and transform it. What is this news? It's the impossibly good news that no matter who we are, no matter what we've done, or how badly we've failed, God never grows tired of loving us. It's the news that God's mercy is from age to age. No one is excluded; no one is left behind! We engage in missionary discipleship not because we're seeking converts, but because we're so amazed by our own experience of the love of God that we want to help others experience it as well. I want to propose that there are three steps to missionary discipleship that help people experience God's amazing love: 1) we must have

a big heart open to God, open to discerning God's movement in our life; 2) we must have the courage and the desire to share the joy of the Gospel; and finally 3) we must be willing to become poor for the poor.

To take up Francis' call to be missionary disciples, we ourselves must first be open to God in our own lives. We encounter the Lord a thousand times a day, if only we open our eyes. Discernment helps us open our hearts to seeking and finding God in all things. Christian discernment means that one takes a step back from life and sees where God is active in it. Ignatius suggests, through the practice of the Examen, that we can do this by asking three questions each day: where was God today? How did I respond? And where is God leading me tomorrow?

The one who discerns life and has a big heart open to God lives differently. She discovers the truth that Arrupe described: "[n]othing 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. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything."

The second step to being a missionary disciple is sharing the joy of the Gospel.

When we encounter the God who never grows tired of loving us, we cannot help but share it. Let me be clear: we

don't share the good news of this God who loves us to manipulate anyone. We don't do this to brag or to exclude those who don't share in our experiences. And we don't do this to engage in some impersonal theological inquiry. No! It's more than that! We're sharing the story of being in love.

When we live such a life, we will radiate joy. A missionary disciple is eager to engage, encounter, and befriend anyone. And in everyone, they can experience God's love and learn something more of the grandeur of God and God's people.

The one who shares the joy of the Gospel, the joy of knowing Jesus, lives differently. A missionary disciple remembers the wisdom of Maya Angelou: people will forget what you said, people will even forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

A missionary disciple doesn't even have to utter the word "God" or "Jesus" to attract people to the beauty, the goodness and the truth of God and God's unending love for us. She's focused on who she loves, not just what she believes.

The final step of being a missionary disciple is to become poor for the poor. A missionary disciple can never be blind to the sufferings all around us and to the brokenness that is present in our own hearts.

We mustn't be naïve: the pain is everywhere. Suffering plays



Mediagram/Shutterstock

out on our television screens, in our communities, in our homes and most especially in our lives and in our own hearts.

Yet too often we aren't moved by it. As Pope Francis lamented last summer, we are a society that has forgotten how to weep. A missionary disciple doesn't hide from these realities. She engages in the grittiness of life. We're not just called to be the "voice for the voiceless"—we're called to listen to their voice. Everyone has a voice. And we must encounter it.

The one who is poor for the poor lives differently. She knows that this road of poverty is uncomfortable, but it isn't sterile. By encountering the Jesus hidden in the suffering of others, we can change, turn around and be converted.

Our faith in God and in Jesus Christ isn't just for us, but also for the transformation of our families, our communities, our Church, our entire world.

Faith allows us to become collaborators in God's great dream for a world where everyone is welcomed, loved, and forgiven and where every man, woman, and child experience the salvation that Christ won for us in his death and resurrection. Two millennia after it was first proclaimed, it is still good news indeed.

Christopher Hale

is a co-founder of Millennial and a senior fellow at Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good. He helped lead national Catholic outreach for President Barack Obama's 2012 re-election campaign. He and his work have been featured on MSNBC, Fox News, CNN, and NPR and in Time, USA Today, and The Washington Post.



IGNATIAN FAMILY TEACH-IN FOR JUSTICE 2014

UPROOTING INJUSTICE. SOWING TRUTH. WITNESSING TRANSFORMATION.

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Public Humility, or Talking With One Another Again

Excerpted from a chapter in *The Jesuit Post* book

"Do you see Jesus in me?! Do you?!!" The shout echoed in the bare room, less a question than an accusation. His eyes opened wide, nostrils flared, the pane of bulletproof glass and the intercom telephone in my hand vibrating with his anger. He was nearly twice my age and had spent most of his life behind glass like that, or bars. I added up the time once – he had spent more time in jail than I had been in school. I'd spent a lot of time in school.

Truth be told, we frustrated each other. When I spoke it was about "the Law" (with a capital letter). In his blunt, obscenity-filled language he spoke about Life. When he talked I would try to filter out the profanity to get to the relevant stuff. He, though, wanted me to see that it was his life that was in the balance, and that his life was important. Mostly I just thought he was trying to be difficult. Undoubtedly he mostly found me condescending.

My mind spun as his question hung in the air, the tension making it hard for me to focus on what I'd come to the prison to talk to him about: his case, what had happened, what sorts of defenses he might have. I'd been doing criminal defense for a little over a year by this point, and I knew the relevant legal issues I needed to map – if he would just focus on what was relevant. He wanted to focus on what was important. "That's really not relevant," I finally responded. It was not the right thing to say.

Encounters like this nagged at me, but it took me a few years (years that saw me move from the practice of law to preparation for priesthood) to understand why. Now I think it's not just that I was wrong, and he was right. I think it's that he and I were speaking different languages, and that this difference reveals a fundamental tension in the law. After all, "the law" is supposed to remain pure, neutral, objective, precise. It never does. How can it when it has to be applied in the chaos of life?

For a long time his question haunted me. On good days, I put it in the back of my mind and just kept going. The other days, well, that's when I prayed.

... Debate over the law has a tendency to become abstract. Very often when we speak of policy and politics, ideologies and ideals, we will quickly turn to broad terms like "freedom" or "fairness" or "justice" in order to understand better what is at stake. The thing is, most of the time we really don't know what we mean when we say these words. Or, more accurately, even when we ourselves know precisely what we mean when we say, for example, "justice," there are other members of our same society who mean something quite different by that word. The connotations with which we fill these words are sometimes so different, in fact, as to be almost perfectly opposed to one another.

This complicates things, to say the least, particularly when we want to reform the law or our legal institutions. We rely upon our society having a shared understanding of our ideals, and the words with which we describe them to one another, if for no other reason than because it's these ideals by

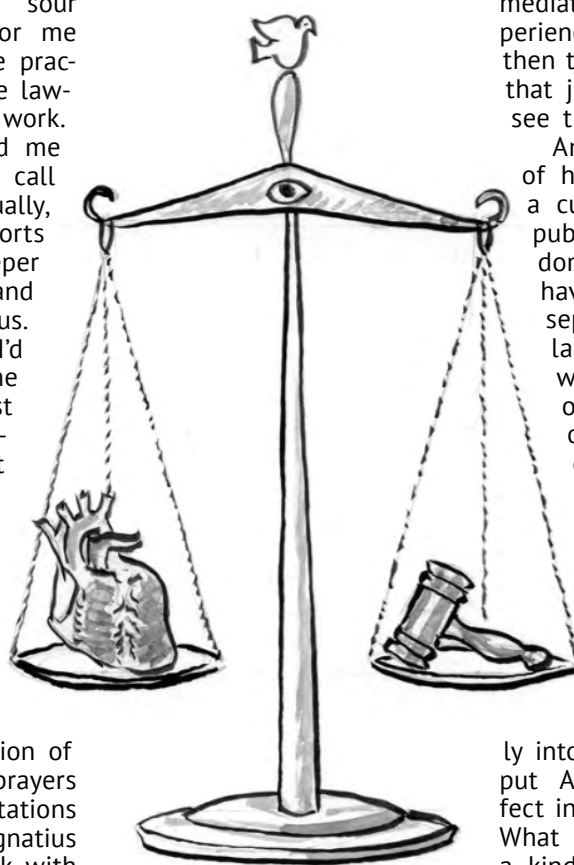
something else. That sour taste, it highlighted for me my discomfort with the practice of law and how we lawyers often approach our work. This discomfort spurred me into what I now would call discernment. Eventually, this and other discomforts would lead me to a deeper sense of my vocation, and to the Society of Jesus.

It was only after I'd been a Jesuit for some months – in the midst of making the Spiritual Exercises, the retreat that forms the heart of Ignatian spirituality and the Jesuit worldview – that I finally understood why it was that my client and I had parted so badly. Saint Ignatius begins the book of the Exercises with a small section of notes that precede the prayers themselves. These annotations describe the way St. Ignatius understood God to work with human beings and, in light of that, how we ought to relate to one another during and after making the Exercises.

It was the twenty-second of these notes that opened my eyes. It reads, "For a good relationship to develop ... a mutual

respect is very necessary. ... Every good Christian adopts a more positive acceptance of someone's statement rather than a rejection of it out of hand. And so a favorable interpretation ... should always be given to the other's statement, and confusions should be cleared up with Christian understanding."

For me, this simple invitation was transformative. It helped me to understand that what was lacking in me was a sense of humility in the face of other people. That, on a deep level, my experience of an event, an idea, a concept does not exhaust its fullness. And that when other persons share their different experiences, they are not wrong. It offered me a new way to approach the world. Disagreements and disputes could be places of growth only if I allowed my-



self to engage different ideas instead of simply seeking to win an argument. Not that there suddenly wasn't a right and a wrong, but that who's right and who's wrong didn't have to be my first question. Annotation 22 helped me to see that, before asking questions of right and wrong, I first had to ask another question: What do you mean by that?

This is what was going on between me and my combative client. We were saying the same words – "fairness," "justice," "law" – but we weren't meaning the same things by them. And neither of us had ever stopped to ask. I remember all this dawning on me while I was making the Exercises and suddenly wishing I could do it all over again. Instead of hectoring him to focus on what was relevant, we could begin with mutual respect. I now wanted to give his statements favorable interpretations. Instead of presuming that I had the only right conception of what we meant when we said "justice" or "fairness," I now wanted to bring my experience into an engagement with his. It was as if in my heart there was a clear ground for a moment, a clear point of

mediation where our two experiences could be joined. I felt then that I could be an aid in that joining, help both of us see the import of the other.

And perhaps this sort of humility is what we, as a culture, need as well. A public humility. ... "Freedom." "Justice." "Law." We have become a people separated by a shared language. By the same words, even. One need only skim commentaries on law or politics to understand how this works.

What would happen, though, if we started by acknowledging this separation and then, rather than throwing up our hands at the emptiness of our language or digging even more deeply into our tired trenches, we put Annotation 22 into effect in our public discussions? What if we proceeded with a kind of public humility, by first trying to understand what it is that makes these words mean something different to so many of us? Could we talk to one another again then?

This does not require us to give up on our deeply held beliefs or our moral commitments. Rather, it requires us to recognize that, when we use words like "freedom" or "law," we are using placeholders. That these are shorthand references to our experiences of these concepts. Already, we've filled them, consciously or not, with particular beliefs and commitments. Other people might fill them differently. We are invited, then, to engage, understand, and respect those differences, even while we might in the end disagree with them. ... Perhaps a public humility can allow us to rebuild our shared discourse on a larger level, to talk with one another again.

Nathaniel Romano, SJ

is a scholastic of the Wisconsin Province of the Society of Jesus currently on his Regency mission as a Staff Attorney at the Milton R. Abrahams Legal Clinic at the Creighton University School of Law. He has a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School and is a member of the state bars of Nebraska and Wisconsin. Nothing in this article is intended as legal advice or to solicit or otherwise establish an attorney-client relationship.

... we will quickly turn to broad terms like "freedom" or "fairness" or "justice" in order to understand better what is at stake. The thing is, most of the time we really don't know what we mean when we say these words.

which we measure our laws. If it's true that our society doesn't seem to have a common sense of what "freedom" or "justice" means, then we have uncovered an enormous problem.

... My relationship with this client, it did not end well. Sitting in that cold and sterile cell, we glowered and we glared. We yelled and we shouted. And we parted on bad terms.

It left a sour taste in my mouth. I was not the person I wanted to be. Maybe I could blame him – he provoked me, he was difficult. But there was

Contagious: Love in the Time of Ebola

Here in Madrid I take a twenty minute walk to mass every Sunday. Directly in my path is the hospital. Her hospital. The one with the 'Ebola Nurse'. The local papers run several front page stories about her every day. A bank of cameras and news vans huddle permanently just outside the gate waiting for something.

There was even a public debate about whether her dog should be euthanized – animal rights on one side and Ebola paranoia on the other. Paranoia won. Excalibur, the dog, was destroyed Wednesday. Her husband remains in quarantine.

As I passed by Sunday evening on my way to church, I looked up at her sixth floor

window. At what, exactly, I'm not sure. For what, exactly, I don't know. It's not often you know the name of a stranger on a particular floor of a hospital. It's not often an entire floor is given over for one patient. In any case, we fixate on that which threatens us. Otherwise, we turn away. The image to the left from Vanity Fair contributor

André Carrilho tells this sad truth with haunting eloquence.

Carrilho's image sits comfortably in line with biblical parable and prophecy. Disease becomes a catalyst for prophetic social com-

mentary and Ebola, the latest leprosy. It's no accident that leprosy figures so prominently in the biblical narratives. The scriptures are about love – and leprosy (like Ebola) is a disease of untouchability. The natural suffering of illness (contamination) begets a moral evil (marginalization). Disease, Ebola or otherwise, is not our only ailment. There is blindness too, and the current crisis might be one of attention and care more than contagion.

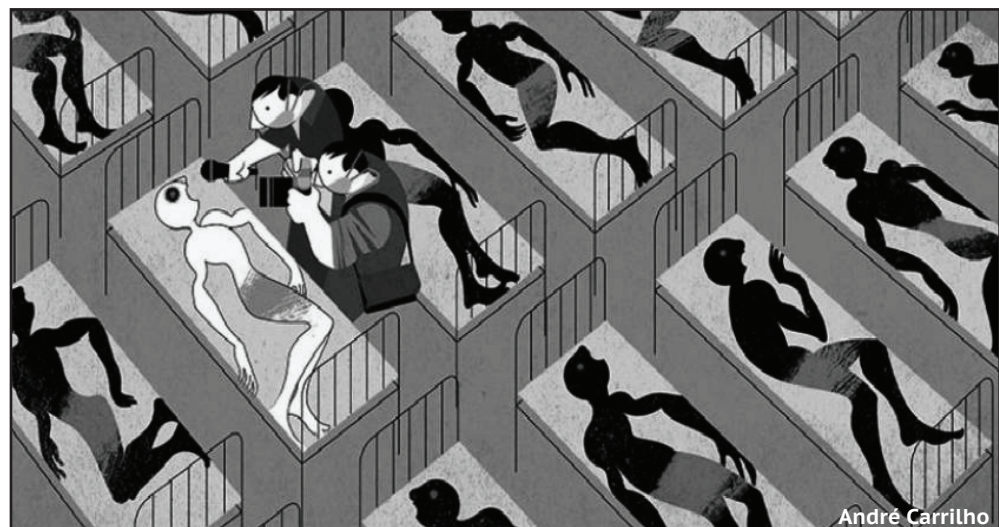
Ebola isn't the only disease that deserves our attention, nor is it the most dangerous. But the way in which it has captured our imagination (or failed to) in recent months reveals a disease far more deadly and pernicious. Its symptoms? Fear and isolation. Paranoia and exclusion. With this disease we ask only, Is it contagious? Can I catch it? We're obsessively concerned about one sick person when thousands are dying. And why?

Because we're worried that it might touch us. And what if? What if the lives and suffering of others actually affected us?

Here's another question: What if we came to understand that they already do? What if we knew that remaining untouched and unmoved meant that we were already dead? What if, instead of fear we were struck with care, instead of paranoia, love? What a cure we would have found! Perhaps then we would move more quickly. Perhaps then we would answer the cries for help. Perhaps then we would replace every selfless infected nurse with a thousand more.

Brendan Busse, SJ

was born and raised in southern California. Before joining the Jesuits he served as a Jesuit Volunteer in Belize and worked in Campus Ministry at LMU as the director of Community Service and Social Justice. He now lives in Madrid where his days are spent learning Spanish, studying spirituality, eating large lunches, and taking long naps.



André Carrilho

The Discerning Act of Three

For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.” — Matthew 18:20

My favorite time of the liturgical year divides a liturgy into 3 parts – each part distinct, yet only vibrant within the whole. The Holy Triduum celebrates Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection with song, space, time, and community. This three-part series keeps me on the edge of my faithful seat knowing what’s coming next and still wondering how it will happen this time.

The number three shows up all over the place, especially in the spiritual life. Think about it. We come to a greater understanding of the relationship of things in groups of three: aligning our mind, heart, and soul; stories have a beginning, middle, and end; we encounter God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

In the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius profoundly relied on understanding God as Trinity to recognize how God was at work in the world. He keenly observed the tender and compassionate concern in which the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

cared for humans and desired to enter into our reality to heal our sin and division. Ignatius imagines them deciding together to send Jesus, to be with and suffer with the poor.

The dynamic of three suggests vulnerability to feedback from the others, an openness to relationship, and a responsibility to care for and be in relationship with others, with society, and with the world.

I remember having to make a major decision to leave my job in order to work with those affected by Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent flooding of New Orleans. I volunteered a few times, but kept my thoughts and desires to myself. As I felt a growing desire to love and serve the people in New Orleans more, I brought this tenderness to God in prayer. And still, I didn’t act on anything – after all, these consoling thoughts were just in my mind and in my prayer. It wasn’t until a friend of mine in New Orleans invited me to consider working there, full-time, on their behalf, that I couldn’t resist. Not just one voice, not just two, but now three voices

confirming and supporting a deep longing and desire to serve God’s people in this way.

The Dynamic of Three catapults us into action. It’s no wonder that God reminds us of God’s presence when there are two or three gathered together. God is relational and so are we. But this relationship cannot remain static: it has to bear fruit in our lives. In fact, there is a danger that these relationships can fall into themselves if there is no outward action.

Just as the persons of the Trinity discerned together and acted on their love by sending Jesus the Redeemer into our world, so we must let our

discernment and relationships send us out into our world.

We are all invited not just to take private or personal action in this broken world, but we are called to choose public and social acts of love.

Ignatius’ relationship with God and dream of serving God at work in the world led him to found a religious order and educational institutions. David Lonsdale writes, “When Ignatius agreed to found colleges, he was providing (in modern terms) ‘graced’ institutions through which the word and kingdom of God could be spread more widely.”

What if we are all called to

bring grace and uncover the grace of our institutions – both our schools and this “institution” of gathering at the Teach-In – in order for real love to permeate the world? Let us discern how to love one another better ... and find the freedom to put that love into action, both in private and in public.

Jocelyn A. Sideco

is a retreat leader, spiritual director and innovative minister who specializes in mission-centered ministry. She teaches Bioethics, Feminist Theology, Christian Sexuality, and Christian Scriptures at Bishop O’Dowd High School in Oakland, Calif. Her online ecumenical ministry, In Good Company, is at contemplativecompanions.org

An Open Letter to the Ignatian Family

Dear Ignatian Family,

I have a confession to make. More often than I would like to admit, I consider leaving the Church. Time and time again I begin to walk away because of the injustice found in the structures of our Church. It can be painful, dehumanizing, and a cause of great suffering for many people, including you and me.

I am heartbroken by the often uncompassionate and ignorant ways that some members of our Church treat the LGBTQ community. I am filled with sorrow when women are barred from leadership and their voices silenced. I am frustrated by Church leaders who seem more focused on power and prestige than on compassionately walking with their communities. All too often our Church serves as the oppressor rather than the lover of humanity. And sometimes, I have to admit, Ignatian Family, these complications seem too much to bear.

In the midst of this darkness there is something that keeps me here. There is something that beckons me to stay, that beckons me to stand up for justice in our Church. Upon reflection, I’ve found it’s not something, it’s someone. It is our God, a God who loves us

first, a God who calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves, a God who calls us to live in radical community, to be Church.

When I think about walking away, when my faith is faltering, when I forget to look at this mess of humanity through God’s eyes, I begin to lose my grasp of what Church actually means. The Church is not only an institutional structure. It is not only made up of the people in power. The Church is us. It is you and me.

God calls us to be Church and imparts on us the responsibility to spend our lives discovering and uncovering our truest selves. Our Christian tradition teaches us that we are made in the image and likeness of God. This is an awesome claim. This means that we are all holy ones. We possess a spark of the divine in the core of our being. Because of this we are called to respect the human dignity of every person and the magnificence of creation all around us. God asks us to be exactly who we are. But, do we, do you and I, actually believe it? Do we really know who we are? Do we believe that we are the Church?

Our gathering together this weekend is a call to action.

We have a responsibility to not only uproot injustice in our

society, but also in our Church. At Santa Clara University last month, the activist and philosopher, Cornell West, reminded us that as Christians we must live and die for the love of people who are catching hell, those who suffer from the trappings of oppression. We must ask, who is catching hell in our own house? And what will we do? How will we respond?

This is our call to action. It is time to take seriously the call to young people from Pope Francis. He charges us: “Have courage. Go forward. Make noise.” and calls us to “go, do not be afraid, and serve,” to realize that “bringing the Gospel is bringing God’s power to pluck up and break down evil and violence, to destroy and overthrow the barriers of selfishness, intolerance and hatred, so as to build a new world.”


This is our call to action.

Natalie Terry

is a graduate student at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, CA and an alum of John Carroll University. She was “ruined for life” when she heard the story of the Salvadoran martyrs at the Ignatian Family Teach In for Justice in 2006. Living in their memory, she hopes to spend the rest of her life working tirelessly with and for a Church where all are truly welcome.

More from *The Jesuit Post* in print

EDITED BY PATRICK GILGER, S.J.
WITH A FOREWORD BY JIM MARTIN, S.J.



20 new essays from TJP writers & a few of the best from our first two years on the web

“St. Ignatius would be proud.”
— **Publisher’s Weekly**

Available here at the Teach-In from Orbis

A Parent’s Ignatian Fundamentals for Fighting Climate Change

When St. Ignatius charged us to “Go and set the world on fire,” I doubt he was looking to actually warm the planet. Yet today, we face one of our toughest challenges as a global community – climate change. As Catholics called to be stewards of the planet and as an Ignatian family encouraged to “see God in all things,” we must act.

As a dad, I need no convincing of that. Climate change will imperil my daughter’s – and her entire generation’s – future. My daughter, Anna, is a brilliant, independent, and bold fifteen-month old who is growing every day. Together we share moments of awe inspired by our beautiful planet. But in these moments, I am also growing more aware of the blanket of greenhouse gases we are wrapping around our planet. We are warming it, and the consequences include intense forest fires, rising sea levels, and droughts.

And Anna will be luckier than many others are. While climate change impacts us all, the most vulnerable communities among us – people living in poverty, indigenous communities, and communities of

color – are most threatened by these challenges. The vulnerable suffer most from the pollution and environmental degradation that is driving this crisis. This challenge looms large, but we can all do something about it. Just as my daughter has to learn fundamentals like her ABCs as the foundation for her future, we can look to Ignatian pedagogy for fundamentals to ground our response to climate change:

Context: We must learn about the local and global challenges that climate change presents for our communities and the ecosystem. We need to pay attention both to the way that all coastal communities are put at greater risk by extreme weather and rising sea levels, but also to understand that economic and social structures are threatened along with the physical coastline.

Experience: We must encourage humble and authentic engagement with communities to help build our compassion and understanding. For example, as we witnessed during Superstorm Sandy, we can work with community groups who bring supplies

to New Yorkers trapped without food, water, and heat after the storm surge destroyed the buildings’ generators.

Reflect: We need to reflect. What is our role in climate change? Whether we are students, advocates, or parents, we must be willing to consider how our current actions in a consumerist culture have helped create this crisis. We need to ask tough questions, questions that are born out of our faith, questions whose answers might demand personal change.

Act: Learning from these efforts, we now must act. As advocates, we can demand our leaders pass climate change policies that cut emissions and invest in the most impacted communities. As a parent, I can save energy by using cloth diapers or walking and biking with our kids to the store.

Evaluate: Even when we do succeed in achieving some positive change, our task is not finished. Rather than just congratulating our-

selves on winning a particular fight, we need to evaluate our actions and strategies – what worked well? What needs to be improved? In light of what we’ve accomplished, what is the most important next step?

Each new experience I have with my daughter helps me look at being a parent in a whole new light. So too, must we cycle through these steps, so we can see our challenges with new perspective. These steps will not solve climate change tomorrow, or maybe in

my lifetime. But I have hope that attention to the fundamentals will help us build a “future not our own” – and one that will leave a solid foundation which my daughter and her generation can cherish.

Anthony Giancaterino

graduated from the University of Scranton in 2004 with a degree in Theology and Political Science. Currently, he is the Director of Policy and Strategy at the Center for Social Inclusion, a nonprofit that supports grassroots communities advocate for racially equitable policy change. Anthony and Katie are the proud parents of Anna Day.



Soloviova Liudmyla/Shutterstock

What We Can Do Is To Give Our Lives



The Romero Prayer

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said

No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection.

No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No program accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

Often attributed to Archbishop Romero, this prayer was written by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw, for a homily at a memorial for deceased priests in November 1979.

We were standing in the courtyard of a small hospital in the mountains of Haiti where we counted ourselves lucky if the electricity lasted past dinner, and Chris was telling the story of a talking with a wealthy donor who helped support the mission of Partners for Health in Haiti. The donor had explained — eloquently and accurately — the background of systemic injustice in Haiti, including the United States' multiple misguided military and political interventions.

"Yes, you're right," Chris said to the donor, "that's exactly how Haiti is broken. *Now what are you doing about it?*"

What Chris had done about it was to take a year at the end of her medical education to come to Haiti, learn Creole, and help manage a hospital. At the end of that year, before returning home, she was spending two weeks shepherding a bunch of Loyola Chicago med students on a medical service and immersion trip, along with their physician mentors and their unprepared Jesuit chaplain: me.

I'm sure that somewhere in the preparations for that immersion trip, I asked those students to pray and reflect with "the Romero prayer," just as I had prayed with it in preparation for my first immersion trip in college. Since then, I've learned that the prayer, so often attributed to Romero, was actually written by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw — but if anything, that only drives home how much the prayer captures the tension of work-

ing for the "faith that does justice." It's so spot-on that it sounds to most of us like something Romero must have said.

Any of us who've done immersion trips, who've shared the lives of our poor and marginalized brothers and sisters even at the shallowest level, have come up against a feeling of insufficiency: the problems are so big, the solutions so far out of reach, the needs so great,

It's not how much we can do, but how totally we can offer ourselves to the work. That's when we truly belong to a "future not our own."

and the poverty so severe that we we run out of words and risk running out of hope as well. And into that gap comes the Romero prayer telling us we are "workers, not master builders" and reminding us to hope in the fact that God, greater than our plans and visions, is already at work building the Kingdom.

To which I imagine somebody like Chris responding: "Yes, that's exactly the theology of the Kingdom of God. *Now what are you doing about it?*"

One response — a vitally necessary response — is to do the kind of work that the Teach-In supports and trains us for, advocating for just social and political structures.

But there's another response, equally if not more necessary, and it's the response Chris had already given that made it visible for me. What we can do about it is to give our lives. In other words: we

can find and live our vocations.

Behind the altar where Romero was martyred, we can now read the words, "On this altar, Romero offered his life to God for his people." That's what "ministers, not messiahs" ultimately means. That's the offering we make when we ask to be "prophets of a future not our own."

Of course not all of us are called to martyrdom, but we are called to give our lives in some definitive way, to choose how we will plant seeds and lay foundations by which God continues building up the Kingdom.

It's something I've learned in my first months of ordained priesthood, offering up the gifts of the people of God at the altar: it's not *how much* we can do, but *how totally* we can offer ourselves to the work. We're called to work bigger than we are, which is why it doesn't leave anything left over or left out. That's when we truly belong to a "future not our own."

So as we remember the martyrs, and as we pray — almost certainly not for the first time — the prayer that reminds us what Romero devoted his life to, I offer you the question that still echoes for me: *Now what are you doing about it?*

Sam Sawyer, SJ

one of the founding editors of The Jesuit Post, probably knows more than he needs to about social media and web technologies, and maybe just barely enough about finding God in them. He is currently finishing a thesis in Boston, and will begin work at Holy Trinity Parish in Washington, DC at Christmas.

Defining Advocacy: Relationship in Action

Advocacy is about keeping memories and stories alive. The most important thing we bring to an advocacy visit has nothing to do with how prepared we are, how much we know about an issue, or how professional we look. Instead, it has everything to do with relationship and with the people whose stories we carry into those meetings. Before I realized this, advocacy always brought to mind uncomfortably formal meetings with senators, awkward or scripted phone calls to representatives, and a race to learn everything there was to know about an issue in a very short period of time.

This is all a very important part of advocacy work, but when I recall moments of advocacy, I don't think of the awkward meetings with stuffy elected representatives. In-

stead, I find myself walking along the border between El Paso and Juarez, between predictable safety and unstable violence. I am listening to a brave, undocumented woman telling the gut-wrenching story of fleeing from gunshots and gang violence with her family. I feel my heart breaking as I'm surrounded by the squeals and laughter of migrant children playing, unaware of the harsh and uncertain future that awaits them in our country. To be an advocate is to never forget their stories — to carry their words and my experiences at the border home with me.

Advocacy is the daily struggle to be vulnerable. I cannot let their words just bounce off of me. Advocacy demands that I do not let faces fade from memory or the sounds of desperation and hope, of

joy and suffering, soften in the miles between Creighton University and El Paso.

From these encounters with those who suffer on the margins of society, I am charged with the mission to go forth, carrying their stories and experiences into my advocacy work — for it is these personal human encounters that hold the power to change hearts. Advocacy calls on others to hear these stories and challenges them to open their hearts to be vulnerable to them as well.

This is the perspective that my co-workers in the Creighton Center for Service and Justice (CCSJ) embrace in our work. This is the perspective that puts the person back into advocacy.

People relate better to stories than to political arguments, because there is more of a person in a story. These



Patrick Poendl/Shutterstock

personal stories give life to public policy discussions, but even more, involving their stories in this process helps give dignity back to those people.

Recognizing this dynamic led the CCSJ to create Ignatian Advocacy Teams in 2009, that not only work to serve people but also to change the systems that oppress them. It's what led those teams and many other students and CCSJ staff to defend Nebraska Law LB599 in order to keep prenatal care for undocumented women in place in 2012.

It is why we pose the question, "Now what?" to our students when they return from their Service & Justice Trips. Since these trips first started in 1989, we've hungered for something more than just a service experience. We've

come back wanting our experiences to change the world around us, because we continue to carry the stories of those we've met through service.

Through such involvement, it quickly becomes apparent that the service we do cannot be complete in itself. We encounter the marginalized, walk in solidarity with them, forge relationships and from these relationships we are moved to advocate for and with them. Ours is an advocacy of putting relationship into action.

Anna Ferguson

is a senior studying journalism and theology at Creighton University. A Student Coordinator in the Creighton Center for Service and Justice for three years and involved with the IFTJ since coming to Creighton. Following graduation, Anna hopes to pursue journalism, faith and social justice wherever they lead her.



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