

My AFMIX Experience

The AFMIX experience has been quite a personal journey for me. The entire experience has provided the opportunity to more deeply explore the journey of St. Ignatius, his spiritual exercises and use of the Examen. As a product of Jesuit education, in high school and college, I certainly understood the foundation and principles of Jesuit education, and, on some level, the journey of Ignatius of Loyola. As a twenty-two year employee of Xavier, I continue to reflect and incorporate many of these foundational teachings and experiences in my work with alumni, parents and friends of the University. However, the AFMIX experience gave a context to more deeply explore my personal feelings through the spiritual exercise. The journey of Ignatius of Loyola became quite personal for me; I began to relate to his thoughts, feelings, doubts, conflicts and reflections in ways I never before imagined. For me, the most meaningful aspect of the AFMIX experience was the break out group facilitated by Brother Darrell Burns, S.J. This was a smaller group of the larger cohort, diverse in every way. During these sessions we gave ourselves complete permission to openly and candidly reflect on many of our personal beliefs and individual challenges. This experience, for me, was an “aha” moment in time. I gained a more profound appreciation and understanding of the Jesuit values of reflection, discernment, cura personalis and most importantly, solidarity and kinship. I really felt “connected” to this group as we shared our thoughts, challenges, frustrations grounded by our assigned readings and personal reflections. This experience was truly a gift! It allowed me to experience Ignatian spirituality through a different prism regarding my prayer life. I discovered a prayer life rooted in daily reflection, appreciation of one another and a desire to share my feelings (not something I am always willing to do).

So, one might ask, how will the AFMIX experience impact my work at Xavier differently? As I see it, it has crystalized how I must remain deeply present to each and every student, faculty/staff, alumni, parent and friend of this University. Much of what I do in my professional life centers around building relationships with people; making them feel good about themselves and the University. I help them to get in touch with their passion in life which usually translates to something positive for the University. AFMIX has helped me more fully appreciate my role and responsibility to bring the gifts of Ignatius Loyola to everyone I meet. I have been given many gifts and advantages in my life, perhaps the greatest gift is the every present desire to find God in all things. This is not always easy in the world as it exists today. AFMIX has allowed me to breathe deeply, reflect more frequently, fall in love more often, and imagine the possibilities.

Thank you Xavier!

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