**AFMIX X Reflection and AFMIX X Playlist**

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I started in the Office of Marketing and Communications at Xavier University in May of 2017. I heard about AFMIX from a co-worker. I thought taking the course would be a great way to quickly grow my understanding of the Jesuit tradition and hopefully become a better ‘marketer’. I also thought it would be helpful to better understand the Catholic faith, as I grew up in a non-denominational Christian home. What I didn’t know when I started the program just three months after beginning my employment with the university, was that two years later I would have developed friendships, confidence in my own religion, and understanding of others’ religions and views.

The first semester provided a great foundation for understanding the tradition and history of the Jesuits. It is inspiring to know the Jesuits were started by St. Ignatius, a person who came to Christ after spending the first half of his life rebelling and indulging in worldly affairs. In a modern way, St. Ignatius’ journey is no different than the common stories we hear of Christians coming to Christ after a major life-altering event. We are all sinners and can be encouraged by the actions, convictions, and passions that St. Ignatius displayed as he founded the Jesuits.

The second semester I learned how people of other religions outside of Catholicism have applied the teachings and practices of the Jesuit tradition. As various speakers came to class each week, I was struck by their openness and willingness to share. Growing up, I was surrounded by people who shared my beliefs. In small group settings, I felt comfortable talking about my faith, but remained relatively quiet in a larger group situation where I was unsure of how they might react to my beliefs. I wasn’t ashamed of my beliefs, but was afraid that an opposing view could cause a rift between us. This semester of AFMIX taught me to be confident in my beliefs and know that others just want to share their own beliefs and be respected for them.

I felt very blessed for the group I was assigned to during the third semester. Our group consisted of people from the following religions: Hindu, Christian Non-Denominational, Catholic, Methodist, Jewish, and no religion. We challenged and stretched each other. I had two main take-aways from the time with this group.

1. The first was a personal take-away that was encouraged by our Jewish group member. She challenged me to think differently about my prayer life. I now approach prayer by first praying for others, then myself.
2. The second take-away was a higher level appreciation of people. The idea was reinforced that no matter their religion, people are good. What surfaced from many of our conversations was that we all want to show more love. More love for the oppressed, more love for our neighbors, and more love for ourselves. I believe the Bible doesn’t strictly define what religion should be because Jesus intended for the universal language of faith to be love. I saw that love in each group member.

The last semester of AFMIX has encouraged us to find ways to apply what we have learned in the previous semesters to our day to day work. I see my work being positively affected in two ways:

1. I have learned that in order to be true to myself, I can’t be afraid to be confident in my beliefs and allow them to shine through me in all areas. One example of this already playing out is in a conversation I had with Tracey DuEst. We were discussing how important music is in our spiritual lives. We decided to create a playlist of happy, inspiration, and religious songs. The playlist has been shared with the AFMIX X group and we hope these songs can help encourage and provide comfort. I hope to have more conversations like this at work, where I can share my beliefs and learn from others. [AFMIX X Playlist](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLByDBljDoMa5cxJSHhB8BHX0jLplZjb4h&jct=32v__N94suIYuFafbSGSSx-I0nvI2w&disable_polymer=1)
2. Through the two years of AFMIX, we have been consistently encouraged to reflect. Coming from the corporate world, time for reflection was never encouraged. We were told to move, move quickly, and ask for forgiveness later. I very much appreciate the environment at Xavier and the Jesuit value of reflection. I have already found myself slowing down, collaborating, and reflecting on conversations in my day to day work. I believe this makes the team stronger and our projects more effective. I plan to continue to have a focus on reflection throughout the day as I interact with the campus community.

I am very grateful for the four semesters of AFMIX and hope to see the program continue to grow, as it is clear the positive impact the class has on the campus community.