

reflection

Xavier’s Seminars on Ignatian Leadership



April 8, 2025

Submitted by: dr. rochelle garner

And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.-- Micah 6:8 (NIV)

When I reflect on this scripture, it makes me think of how I have been intentional with the way I live my life and how I engage and connect with others in co-creating the world around us. Specifically, this scripture is defined as, “To”:

**Do Justly:**

*This means to act with fairness, integrity, and righteousness in all your dealings, both with God and with others. It's about upholding what is right and just, not just in your personal life, but also in your interactions with the world.*

**Love Mercy:**

*This emphasizes compassion, kindness, and forgiveness, especially towards those who are vulnerable or in need. It's about extending grace and understanding, rather than focusing on judgment or punishment.*

**Walk Humbly with Your God:**

*This signifies a recognition of your dependence on God and a refusal to elevate yourself above others or to rely on your own strength or righteousness. It means to be open to God's guidance and to acknowledge that you are a servant of God, not the master.* https://www.bible.com/bible/111/MIC.6.8.NIV

I believe this definition, aligns with ***Cura Propria*** in *building a profound culture of belonging and inclusive excellence.*

When I think of what building that profound culture of belonging and inclusive excellence means, I think of having an ethic of care by being intentional in helping “the least of these.” In many ways, I believe the least of these are a part of the majority of the campus population; while the major difference is that some individuals can be visibly identified and other individuals’ “least” is hidden until it is discussed. Often the discussion is about how one needs to be supported based on their specific “need, challenge, or difference.”

Unfortunately, BIPOC populations are under attack across the country because of the melanin in our skin (but, Aren’t we all made in the image and likeness of God?; and Isn’t this the same God whom the Jesuit community reverences?) which is more easily identified than others who would fit the category of “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).” Yes, I realize that many students at the university have a certain wealth and a kind of privilege that their peers may not have; yet, some of these same students have specific needs that are not immediately seen (i.e., identified as a learning challenge, mental health and/or eating disorder, substance use or another type of need to support one’s personal growth and academic success) but requires an accommodation through the Office of Accessibility & Disability Resources. Wouldn’t this fall into the category of DEI? Yet, the term DEI has become synonymous with BIPOC; coopted into a derogatory term and unfortunately can no longer be used at our institution and many other institutions throughout the country because of the current political climate.

Hence, it’s time for everyone to rise to the occasion to ensure that we’re consciously focused on helping the “least of these” in our classrooms, residence halls, clubs and organizations, and throughout the campus community. When I hear of students being treated with vile and vitriol in the classroom by other students or professors making snide or condescending remarks because of one being BIPOC or because they are a veteran or currently serving in the military, I beg to ask the question “What happened to building a profound culture of belonging and inclusive excellence?” Such behavior does not build, it tears down and disheartens those students who came to this university to receive an excellent education and engage in ***Cura Personalis*** as it is espoused in our Ignatian values.

As I have attempted and will continue to impart with students and the XU community ***Cura Propria****,* I am challenging those who remain on the sidelines to step up and do the same. Hopefully we will one day have what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called for, which was a *Beloved Community* with peace, justice and harmony amongst all people regardless of the color of their skin, economic wealth, or challenges they may be faced with…to have a *Beloved Community* for all and certainly for the “least of these.” In doing so, it will ensure that we give a voice to the voiceless and help to build a profound culture of belonging and inclusive excellence. Furthermore, this was the work of Jesus; he had a “Street Ministry,” he walked among, helped and healed the “least of these” and that’s what He called us to do.

As I think about my role in serving the “least of these” as a “Coach, Care Manager, Student Support Specialist” with the Veteran and Military Family Center, I will continue to challenge myself and others by asking the following reflection questions:

* How can I adapt the *Daily Examen* in my own daily walk to better understand myself and how to continue to co-create the community/world around us?
* What ways can I continue to let my life speak and be a beacon of light for those who seek my assistance (i.e., guidance, coaching, a word of encouragement, etc.)?
* What can I do to learn more about the population I serve to ensure that I’m meeting their needs, or guiding them to the appropriate resources?
* How can I help colleagues (i.e., staff, administrators) around me to reflect on best practices and ways to address students’ needs for the greater good of our community?
* How can I adapt and commit to walking the Labyrinth to seek guidance in troubled and not so troubles times?
* What can I do for self-care while in the process of helping others on a daily basis, and commit myself to doing it?