Xavier’s Seminars on Ignatian Leadership

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As I began this course in January 2024 each week’s topic resonated with me. The first class, discussion on humble leadership was the best way to begin in my opinion- as it put the cohort on equal footing. We then reflected more on the Jesuit mission that Xavier embraces and strives to emulate these in its teachings and mentoring of faculty, staff, students and families. Xavier is purposeful in assisting students, families, staff and faculty to know and live the “Gifts of Our Ignation Hertiage”; specifically identified as *Cura Personalis*, *Solidarity & Kinship*; *Service Rooted in Justice & Love*; *Magis*; *Reflection* & *Discernment*; which was confirmed in the survey results presented.

The reflection questions that were posed to the group during several sessions: *What did you hear?* *What are you most worried about?* *What are your next steps?* were very powerful to me. Reflecting by asking these questions before a meeting/class in my mind is a way for me to think about the topic and identify what I think the path should/could look like. When the answers to these questions are shared, this forces me to put aside my bias and really listen to someone else’s opinion- thereby promoting humility and developing a plan that everyone can get behind. Reflection is a way to promote critical thinking and evaluate yourself to grow and move towards living the Ignation principles listed above.

In my role at Xavier, I mostly interface with the students. After the class discussing reflection, I have decided to start each class next semester with a moment of silent reflection so that students can quiet and center themselves before we discuss the topic of the day. This is a way for the students to put their cares away, for a little bit, before we jump right into the course teachings. I share that in nursing you have to put away your stress, problems and biases when caring for clients. The clients look to the nurse (our students) for care, compassion, advocacy, competency and someone to listen to them. If the nurse/student is focused on their own issues/problems and cannot put aside their concerns/biases when they enter the clinical setting, the clients who are relying on them, will not get the care they deserve.

Practicing this silent reflection in each class, my hope is that the students will be able to stop before they begin their day as the nurse and be able to be “present” for each client. This is the real meaning of Cura Personalis for me, focusing on someone else and not allowing your personal issues block you from seeing the uniqueness, beauty, joy and love in others. In nursing, most clients are dealing with pain, illness and/or devasting news; in other words, they are struggling. The nurse can make all of the difference in a client’s and family’s experience during such a hard/difficult time, by putting aside their own problems and focusing on the needs of the client/family at hand. But if the nurse/student is more fixated on the fight they had with their significant other, or the grade they got on the last test, the client/family will feel the tension, lack of interest and /or the nurse’s/student’s distraction, therefore not being valued when the client so desperately needs it.

In my nursing practice and as an instructor of our future nurses, I embrace and try to emulate the Ignation principles that we have been delving into each class. I incorporate the gifts of Ignation in my classes, so that the students will see that each person is a “*reflection of the Devine*”- or said another way “*Imago Dei*”- image of God.