

PART 1



Mission to Educate

My Jesuit Journey



Not Doing For, Being With

Understanding My White Privilege

“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

—LUKE 10:41–42

Before I tell another word of this story, I want to acknowledge that I am keenly aware that I am a privileged white male. To help me understand my privilege, I reflect on the sisters we encounter in Luke’s Gospel—multitasking Martha and meditative Mary. This link may seem a little out of left field, so let me explain.

As dean of Arrupe College, a post-secondary institution where 97 percent of the students are people of color, I am conscious of my status as an exceedingly privileged, middle-aged white man. I don’t think that my experience of being the first from my family to attend college qualifies me to see myself like an Arrupe student—I don’t impose my experience as universal. I am grateful for the opportunities I’ve enjoyed to study and eventually to earn four master’s degrees and a doctorate. (My mother once observed, “These diplomas, they’re like baseball cards for you.”) I am proud of my achievements, but my history is not a playbook for our students. Rather, I enjoy hearing

about their experiences and aspirations. In fact, I'm inspired by their stories.

Back to white privilege. Earlier this year a diverse group of Arrupe supporters and I discussed job placement for our students. I'm frustrated that more of our students aren't able to work. Approximately 20 percent of our students are undocumented, and accompanying them through the Scylla and Charybdis of attaining an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) makes real for me the desperate need for immigration reform in this country. Other students struggle with the pressures of long commutes, childcare and other family demands, as well as the need to focus on courses at Arrupe. Our schedule is very structured and predictable—students take courses during mornings or afternoons Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. The design is deliberate; we don't want Arrupe to contribute to the dismal statistic that only 5 percent of students enrolled in two-year programs graduate in two years. Put another way, we want Arrupe students to be members of the 5 percent club. Yet, the focus, structure, and emphasis on daily contact with students, beneficial as they have been to our overall retention rate, can get in the way of our students finding a job. Those who do find jobs that they can navigate end up working in fast-food restaurants and retail stores. My fear, however, is that our students will plateau at Taco Bell or Nordstrom Rack, that their horizons don't include knowing many people in professions like finance or in the STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) fields.

The conversation with our Arrupe supporters surfaced these tensions. A number of the participants who share my demographic talked about internships as a method of bolstering our students' resumes. Unpaid internships could open doors, they reasoned, by offering networking opportunities and exposure to white-collar professional settings.

One of the discussion participants, an African American man, shook his head. "Internships are a luxury Arrupe students can't

afford,” he said. “They need money now, to help their mothers make rent, to help buy groceries, to cover their own immediate expenses.” The scales fell from our eyes. The unpaid internship, an effective strategy for one demographic, didn’t apply to another. For Arrupe students the model for growth and opportunity is not one size fits all.

Along these same lines, I am increasingly aware of how “microaggressions”—expressions by those who enjoy privilege that unintentionally dismiss and degrade women, people of color, gays and lesbians, and people with disabilities—tumble out of my mouth or the mouths of others.

During a discussion about Arrupe’s mission statement, for example, one of the participants said, “We don’t have any language about ‘saving the students.’” The remark was made benignly, generously, but I still dug in my heels. “Let’s let Jesus save,” I replied. “That’s his job.” Saving our students smacked of a savior complex, or colonialism, or worse.

During another discussion, with a campus ministry professional, I discussed the possibility of Arrupe students participating in an alternative spring break immersion trip to Appalachia to build houses and work in soup kitchens while reflecting on the factors that cause people to lack food, clothes, and shelter. The campus minister expressed some reservations. “I wonder,” she said, “if Arrupe students are really up for the task, if they are mature enough to be away from home.” Then she added innocently, sincerely, “Other students spend time during the immersion trip grappling with issues of social injustice. Would the Arrupe students be able to do that?”

“Hmmm,” I began. “Before our conversation, I met with Luisa, a student with a 4.0 average at Arrupe whose father was just deported. That’s a level of maturity that awes me.” My indignation spurred me to continue, “Interesting point you made about being away from home. Five of our students are homeless, so they are very accustomed to being away from home.” I

concluded by observing, “As for grappling with issues of social injustice, this isn’t just an abstract concept that our students might visit for a week. It’s all they know.”

Service projects aside, when I floated the whole idea of Arrupe College by an accomplished higher-education leader, he said, “We considered doing that at my institution, but the faculty pushed back. ‘Those students, the ones who attend community colleges,’ they said, ‘they’re not the same caliber as our students. If they became a part of our college, they would diminish our brand.’” In response to my friend’s pitch to incorporate a community college in an economically depressed neighborhood into their university, they instead offered to serve as volunteers at the community college, but to keep it at that.

Back to Martha and Mary. Frequently when I’m giving a talk during an Arrupe student town hall, I repeat author Robert Greenleaf’s mantra, “To serve is to lead, to lead is to serve.” My understanding of why I serve and how to serve has grown since my own college and post-college experiences led me to join the Society of Jesus. Martha and Mary are a part of that evolution.

I am a fan of Martha. Martha is real in her emotions—she loves Jesus enough to be honest with him about her disappointment in him. In John’s Gospel, when her brother Lazarus dies, she expresses anger at Jesus for not showing up. And Martha’s insight, that “she has come to believe” that Jesus is Lord, succinctly and profoundly captures our faith journey, one that is gradual and ongoing.

My experience at Arrupe informs my appreciation and appropriation of Martha and Mary in Luke’s Gospel—the overwrought hostess and the sister sitting at the feet of Jesus. Martha is doing for Jesus; Mary is being with Jesus. Our mission at Arrupe is not so much *doing for* our students, particularly when our white privilege results in damaging and deadening

microaggressions. Our mission is *being with* our students, learning about and from them, sharing our stories and the gift of Jesuit higher education. The best ministerial strategies of the Society of Jesus—inculturation, learning about and celebrating the cultures of those we are assigned to serve—stem from *being with*, as Mary exemplifies by being with Jesus.



Don't Be Afraid

The best moments in life are those that you don't anticipate.

—ARRUPE STUDENT

When I celebrate mass, I often preach about what's happening at Arrupe. In fact, I preach about Arrupe whenever anyone is willing to listen!

The first time that I gave a homily about Arrupe College was about a month before I moved to Chicago to take on my new assignment leading the new school. I was on Cape Cod, celebrating mass for Arrupe board member Mark Shriver and his family on the fifth anniversary of the death of Mark's mother, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the founder of Special Olympics. The gospel reading for that day was Matthew 14:22–33, the Calming of the Storm, in which Jesus says to Peter and the disciples, "Take courage. It is I. Do not be afraid." As I get older, the encouragement from Jesus to let go of fear becomes increasingly meaningful.

When I preach, I'm often preaching to myself. During that mass on the Cape, I was deep in transition. I was leaving the University of San Francisco and heading to Chicago to launch Arrupe College. I had no idea if this project would take off or

not. It kept churning in my mind that this was the Society of Jesus's first junior college for under-represented students. "We have to get this right for these students," I fretted. "I have to get this right."

Besides my anxieties driving my preaching content, I was also aware this was Eunice Shriver's anniversary. During the mass I recalled seeing Mrs. Shriver ten years before at a lunch at the William Simon Foundation in New York, during which she received a half-million-dollar gift for Special Olympics. Eunice Shriver's message to her special friends with intellectual disabilities echoed Jesus's charge to the disciples—do not be afraid. Don't be afraid to be an athlete, Mrs. Shriver had said. Don't be afraid to go to school. Don't be afraid to pursue a job. Don't be afraid.

I found her message an inspiration as I was contemplating my new assignment, and I shared that feeling with Mrs. Shriver's children and grandchildren. I talked about the students that we were anticipating at Arrupe, students from low-income backgrounds who are the first in their families to attempt college. I reflected on their fears about belonging (or not) in Jesuit higher education. I imagined the similarities between the disciples on the tempest-tossed boat in the Gospel and the students who feel the winds pushing against them—winds of injustice, of prejudice, of lack of opportunity, of lack of access. I then described my role as dean of Arrupe College as one who would say to our students, "Take courage. Do not be afraid." Of course, my exhortation was directed at myself, as I was taking on a new apostolate, relocating to a new city, starting a new job and chapter in my life, learning how to navigate new demands on me. To all of this Jesus says, "Do not be afraid."

In the Gospel, Peter steps into the unknown and is vulnerable. We are called to do the same, and we are also called to stretch out our hands to catch those who are vulnerable and say to one another, "Don't be afraid." In starting Arrupe College my prayer

has focused on this theme. We are building God's kingdom and putting aside our fears and addressing our students' fears, concerns, and disappointments about not getting into a four-year college, about not having the financial resources to attend a four-year college, about not feeling worthy of college. Together with the students, I imagined Jesus saying to them and to me, "Do not be afraid." Together with the students, Jesus invited them and me, and our fears, to the next chapter of our lives.



Cura Personalis— Care for the Whole Person

After the first meeting I attended at Arrupe, I clearly saw how motivated, excited, and driven Arrupe was for the students to be successful. With their inclusive spirit, they wanted every person to feel wanted. That was what I needed going into my first year of college, a support team. I could see that every single staff and faculty truly cared for my well-being and my success, and that is why I chose Arrupe.

—ARRUPE STUDENT

A dear friend of mine in New York, Michael Angelo Allocca, died recently at the age of eighty-one. I saw him for the last time when I was home at Christmastime in 2015. Mike suffered from Alzheimer's, and when he died, his family asked if I would preach at his funeral at their parish, St. Francis Xavier, in the Chelsea section of Manhattan. I go back thirty-five years with Mike, his wife, Rose, and their sons. We met shortly after I completed my year as a member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, often called JVC. I often introduced Rose and Mike Allocca as my Brooklyn parents.

My biological parents, Suzette and Nick Katsouros, had been very concerned at the time about me joining JVC. Earlier, during my freshman year at the University of Maryland, I had thrown my parents a curve ball when I told them I wanted to major in English. “English?” my father, the son of Greek immigrants, asked. “You speak English. Why are you majoring in English?” During my years at Maryland, while I was reading Chaucer and Shakespeare, Flannery O’Connor and Toni Morrison, and while my parents’ eyes were rolling, I also engaged in several service activities, a practice inculcated from programs in which I participated during high school. It was no surprise to anyone, then—except my parents—when I applied to the JVC for a year of service. “JVC?” my father asked before I could explain what the acronym stood for. “You know nothing about stereo equipment. You majored in English. How can you work for JVC?”

JVC missioned me to serve as a childcare worker at Covenant House, in New York’s Times Square. During a JVC midyear retreat, I listened to a presentation by Jesuit Fr. Dean Brackley on Ignatian spirituality. I had not attended Jesuit schools before, so Dean’s references to “finding God in all things” and striving to become “contemplatives in action” caught my attention powerfully.

So did ministry at Covenant House, a center for homeless youth. There I experienced the frustration of making progress with people a few years younger than me through counseling and conversations about faith, hope, and a better future, only to see everything come crashing down when a young man went AWOL or a young woman’s thirty-day tenure at Covenant House ended. During those days I thought about my own need for predictability, for community. As my JVC year was drawing to a close, I looked for a new ministry. I wasn’t a Jesuit and wasn’t considering a vocation to the Jesuits, but I admired Dean Brackley and other Jesuits I had met during JVC.

Dean Brackley had been a founder of Nativity Mission School in the early 1970s, ten years before I met him. After JVC, in 1982, I began teaching at Nativity, located at 204 Forsyth St. on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Nativity was the first of what became the Nativity Miguel model schools. In the 1970s, prior to my move to Forsyth Street, Jesuits like Dean and laypeople there recognized that the public schools in District 1 missed the mark when it came to meeting the needs and celebrating the strengths of the children and grandchildren of immigrants. The Lower East Side had served as the cradle of newcomers to New York for over a century. The neighborhood has been gentrified in recent years and is now the cradle of boutique hotels and high-end restaurants and clubs. Displaced from this area are the Puerto Ricans and Dominicans and Mexicans I knew during my five years of living and working there, immigrants and the children of immigrants who dwelled in the tenements on Eldridge, Rivington, Pitt, Stanton, and Houston Streets, or the public housing projects along the FDR Drive.

The students enrolled at Nativity hailed from these projects and tenements. Nativity was an all-boys middle school (sixth, seventh, and eighth grades) that included a leadership-training summer camp in Lake Placid. Mike and Rose Allocca were very involved with Nativity. Rose, an accomplished teacher and administrator at Brooklyn Tech High School, volunteered at Nativity and eventually served as Nativity's principal. Mike, a successful New York financier, hosted many dinners at various restaurants in Brooklyn and Manhattan; Mike said his ministry was to feed hungry Jesuits.

When I met Rose and Mike, I wasn't a Jesuit yet. I taught and lived on the Lower East Side in an apartment with other faculty at Nativity for five years, from 1982 to 1987. I entered the Society of Jesus because of my experience of ministry, my students, and the Jesuits at Nativity. I was inspired by Jesuits like Dean Brackley and Ed Durkin, who served as director of

Nativity. The meals out with Mike and Rose may have been inspirational, too.

Living with and working with and for the people of the Lower East Side in the 1980s also inspired me. In the projects kids just ten or eleven years old made quick money running nickel bags of pot. They could help their mothers with rent or groceries or buy basketball shoes or a new coat. This was a far more immediate satisfaction of needs than studying grammar and diagramming sentences with me or learning algebra taught by Ed Durkin.

Gangs were a presence on the Lower East Side, along with pushers. Young people who aged out of services offered at places like Covenant House found their way downtown from Times Square to homeless shelters on East Third Street and to the food, kindness, and beds at the Catholic Worker houses. In closest proximity, however, were prostitutes, working across the street from Nativity at Sara Delano Roosevelt Park. The Nativity students and faculty knew the prostitutes, some by name, because of their constant presence on our block. The prostitutes, mostly teenagers, were marching to their deaths from overdoses and AIDS. My colleagues at Nativity could track the progress of drug addiction or the virus on the faces of these girls as they lost more and more weight and then as they disappeared from Forsyth Street.

One morning I could tell my students in grammar class were not exactly engrossed by the lesson on identifying parts of speech. They were following some loud commotion outside. Maria, a prostitute who was likely no older than sixteen, was shrieking f-bombs at her pimp. I stuck my head out the window of my classroom and shouted, "Hey, Maria, can you take this down the street?" Maria and the pimp looked up. "Oh, Steve, okay, no problem," she replied. As Maria and the pimp proceeded south on Forsyth Street, the f-bombs faded. Back to parts of speech.

In circumstances like these I marveled at the resilience of my students and their capacity to travel in the world of a Jesuit school and the world of the street. I also shuddered to think of how much they carried inside, how much they saw and experienced and knew already in middle school. Another time I witnessed a prostitute stabbing her pimp on a Friday afternoon as our students left classes and headed to Sara Delano Roosevelt Park to play. The pimp was bleeding all over the Nativity car Ed Durkin used to drive students home after evening study hall. I remember trying to distract the students from the sight, as if they hadn't seen similar scenes last month, last week, last night.

When I first arrived at Nativity, I was concerned that there weren't many books in our library. But eight blocks north, on 2nd Avenue and Saint Mark's Place, was a branch of the New York Public Library. So I tried an experiment with two of my students, Willie and Raymond. I tried to convince them that the library was a wonderful place that we should visit. "The library has books that match any possible interest you might have," I said with enthusiasm. "It has all kinds of resources, and there are librarians who are nice and helpful."

Willie and Raymond listened to me as if I were describing another planet, not a location that was a ten-minute walk north, but they were game to see what the library was all about. We walked up 2nd Avenue, discussing their interests, what kinds of books they might check out. Once inside the library we were greeted by staff members who were happy to help. We also noted that the library served as a haven for the homeless and for those who suffer from mental illness.

Martial arts captivated Willie, so we began to search that section of the shelves. As we began to register Raymond and Willie for library cards, someone grabbed me and started pummeling me, yelling, "I told you not to do that, I told you not to do that." I had inadvertently brushed against this person, which apparently offended him. As I dodged swings, I realized he was ill, he was

suffering. (So was I—my eye had begun to swell.) Rather than becoming defensive, I said, “You’re right. I’m wrong. I’m sorry, I should not have done that.”

His rage subsided, and he walked away from Willie, Raymond, and my black eye. My students looked sick. So much for all of my rhetoric about how great libraries are, I thought. “We hate this place,” they said. “Who wants to go to the library and watch your teacher get beaten up?” I stumbled back down 2nd Avenue with a swollen eye and a throbbing head and shuffled into Nativity Mission Center. Ed Durkin was counseling one of our students. He looked up at me and said, “What the hell happened to you, Steve? Where have you been?” I gave the short answer: “the library.”

My five years at Nativity served as my training ground for the Jesuit concept of *cura personalis*—care for the whole person. My colleagues lived above the school in the tenement that housed Nativity. We knew the blocks and buildings of our students. We spent time with them after school, evenings in study hall, summers at Nativity’s camp in Lake Placid. We interacted with their families. Willie, my library companion, grew into a volatile young man, especially after his mother died of AIDS. Willie lived with an overwhelmed grandmother, and he carried a gun. He didn’t graduate from Nativity. Instead, he visited the school once, brandishing his pistol. I ran after him on Forsyth Street to see if something I could do or say would make a difference, would reach him somehow. I wasn’t able to catch up with him that afternoon.

Several years later I was walking on the Lower East Side and spotted Willie pushing a toddler in a stroller. I had heard he had married a girl named Carolina and they were the parents of a little boy. Bumping into Willie transported me to the grammar classes I had taught at Nativity. I had used a textbook called *Drill for Skill* that the students dubbed “Kill for Skill.” We diagrammed sentences and put together endless writing and public-speaking

and book-publishing exercises. As Willie and I greeted each other and I met his son in the stroller, I recalled that Willie was one of the less engaged students.

Willie volunteered, "You know, I'm teaching Carolina what you taught us, Mr. K." I wasn't sure where this was going and asked, "What do you mean, Willie?" He answered, "I still have my copy of the *Drill for Skill* book we used. Remember, 'Kill for Skill'? I'm teaching her the parts of speech." I was dumbfounded. "Get outta here," I said. "We were in class together seven years ago. No way." Willie insisted, "No, look." He pulled out his old assignment notebook. "Now see, Mr. K, Carolina and me, we're working on personal pronouns, because you taught us that in October of 1982." This completely floored me. There was no reason for Willie to carry this artifact from seven years before. He had relocated repeatedly since then, and his life was very unpredictable. But he hung onto that textbook because it meant something to him.

Although Willie had not graduated from Nativity, many students did. But the big question at the time was, "Now what?" To address this question my friend Rose Allocca and I initiated Nativity's Graduate Support Program in 1984. By then, Nativity had been enrolling classes and graduating eighth graders for over ten years. My predecessors and contemporaries at Nativity and I found our commitment to *cura personalis* had been successful, but student confidence unraveled when they transitioned to high schools with higher enrollments, and in some cases with a majority of white students. (Nativity began in part to assist the students in enrolling at and graduating from New York-area Jesuit or Catholic high schools.) Unless the Nativity graduates were academically excellent or athletic superstars or always in detention ("JUG" in Jesuit parlance), they could get lost. Even after going on to high school, they would often gravitate back to Nativity because it was home, in their neighborhood, because they had relationships with faculty, staff members, and administrators

there. Nativity's Graduate Support Program began by offering tutoring and a special study hall at night for our graduates.

But we needed to do more. We wanted to collaborate with the parents of our students. This desire drove me to travel to the Dominican Republic to learn Spanish, since the majority of our students and their parents were Dominican. Upon my return my Spanish vocabulary and accent were almost comical, but the Nativity community was grateful that I attempted to learn their language. I would give presentations to the parents in mangled Spanish, but they would applaud. The important thing was that I developed enough of a vocabulary to communicate with the parents about how their sons were progressing academically or about the high school application process.

As part of the Graduate Support Program I started to accompany parents of Nativity graduates to parent-teacher conferences and other events at the high schools where their sons were attending. Magdalena, the mother of Julian, asked me once if I would attend a parents' association event with her at her son's high school. I was close to the family. Magdalena worked in a sweatshop not far from the family of seven's one-bedroom apartment. The high school event was a fashion show, and the other attendees intended to purchase what the models were wearing. Magdalena couldn't afford to do that but discovered another connection to what was presented on the runway: Magdalena had sewn the zippers on the dresses.

Another parent, Zilpa, also worked in a sweatshop. I wanted Zilpa to see how long the commute from the Lower East Side would take for her son Fernando to arrive at his high school uptown on time. The mothers and I would time the commute from the 2nd Avenue subway station near Nativity to the different schools. Zilpa, dressed in her Sunday best, and I traveled to Regis High School, the prestigious tuition-free prep school run by the Jesuits on New York's Upper East Side. When we

arrived, some of the faculty members who were going to teach Fernando spoke with us. Some of them spoke Spanish, and they were very hospitable. Zilpa appreciated their kindness, but she was most taken with the flowers in the neighborhood where Fernando would go to school. Why? Because there were no flowers on the Lower East Side and no flowers in the sweatshop. I think that the next time Zilpa was at Regis was probably for Fernando's graduation, but she knew that he was in a safe environment, one very different from the one in which she lived. She trusted the Jesuits, she trusted the high school, she trusted Nativity, and I was honored that she trusted me. No *cura personalis*, no trust.



Pretend

Kids need heat and light to survive. Heat, in the form of respectful, dignified vigilance over them. Light, in the form of hope for some kind of future beyond this.

—FR. GREG BOYLE, SJ, HOMEBOY INDUSTRIES

I entered the Society of Jesus in 1987. Part of our training, or formation, includes regency, two or three years of practical experience working in a Jesuit institution, typically a school, before advancing to theology studies. For my regency I was assigned to a team to start a middle school based on the Nativity model at St. Aloysius Parish in Harlem. I was reunited with Jesuit Fr. Ed Durkin from Nativity, who was such a huge influence on me before I entered the Society. Ed and I worked with a young African American man named Clyde Cole, who is now a good friend. Clyde graduated from Regis High School in New York and played basketball while attending Northwestern University.

Ed, Clyde, and I were the original team. We called the school the Gonzaga Program. I taught nine classes a day and raised money for scholarships and special projects. As we grew our student body and expanded our faculty by bringing in members of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, I supervised them and worked on developing the school's curriculum. None of these earned me as much appreciation as another job: I was also the janitor that first year! I had another role that earned me almost no appreciation at all: I served as the master after classes in the JUG room, where students appeared when they received detention. (Countless alums of Jesuit schools believe JUG is an acronym for Justice Under God. In fact, JUG is a contraction of the Latin *iugere*, "to yoke," as an ox, for the purpose of manual labor, or punishment.) No one was happy in the JUG room.

I taught our writing course at the Gonzaga Program of St. Aloysius. Our classes were small by design. For one assignment I asked the fourteen students in my class to write about what a reunion would be like twenty years later. Who would be doing what? What high schools and colleges might they have attended? Where would they be living? Who would be married and raising a family?

Of course, I got caught up in what I thought would be a meaningful and enjoyable assignment for our close-knit class. I was brought back to earth when one of the students asked, in a very matter-of-fact manner, "Mr. K, what if you think you won't be alive twenty years from now?"

That gave me pause.

I remember having the presence of mind to simply say, "Pretend." But asking the students to pretend at the age of thirteen that they would be alive at the age of thirty-three revealed a startling fact: our students did not have a future orientation in Harlem. We began the Gonzaga Program in 1991, during the height of the crack epidemic, when gun violence was rampant.

Ed Durkin and I lived with two other Jesuits on West 132nd between 7th and 8th Avenues. When I first arrived and walked through the neighborhood, I was asked, “Are you lost?” I became accustomed to falling asleep at night with gunshots in the background: white noise. But the question from the students at the Gonzaga Program—what if you think you won’t be alive twenty years from now?—has bothered me since the day I introduced a seemingly benign assignment in class. *Pretend.*



Don’t Sell the Students Short

*I’ve ultimately learned that although being an adult is rough,
I can do it.*

—ARRUPE STUDENT

My relationship with the city of Chicago didn’t begin with my time as dean and executive director of Arrupe College. After finishing two years at the Jesuit novitiate at St. Andrew Hall in Syracuse, the next phase of my Jesuit formation included two years of philosophy studies. My options were Fordham in the Bronx or Loyola University Chicago. I already had a master’s degree from Fordham, which I had earned when I was working and teaching at Nativity. A close Jesuit friend of mine from the class ahead of me, Ed Cunningham, was in Chicago and liked his experience at Loyola. I talked to my superiors in New York and was assigned to Chicago.

It was a wonderful time. I didn’t realize that I would like philosophy, but the department was very strong. I had terrific Jesuit instructors like Mark Henninger and Harry Gensler and Leo Sweeney, and lay instructors like Sue Cunningham and Patricia Werhane. And, of course, there was everyone’s favorite,

a BVM nun, Sr. Louise French, who was a wonderful friend to so many Jesuit scholastics. During that time, besides reconnecting with my friend Ed (who later left the Jesuits), I made a number of new friends, particularly two Jesuits: Karl Kiser, who recently finished his presidency at the University of Detroit Jesuit High School after fourteen years at the helm; and Gene Geinzer, who was already ordained and teaching in the Loyola Department of Fine Arts at the time and now is working and teaching in Beijing.

I was grateful for that time because it really expanded my horizons in the Society of Jesus. I had been focused on New York in that typical “there’s no life west of the Hudson” way, and while I still have the strongest affinity to New York and consider New York home, I loved doing a “deep dive” into the Midwest, Chicago particularly. I was impressed by Chicago’s architecture; neighborhoods; public transportation; food, sports, and arts scene; and affordability—especially compared to New York City.

I spent two years at Loyola Chicago studying philosophy and ended up getting a master’s degree at Loyola before being assigned as a regent to begin the Gonzaga Program at St. Aloysius in Harlem. Karl Kiser and I reconnected in theology. Karl had served in Peru during his regency, where he met Fr. John Foley. When John returned to the United States after many, many years in Peru, he had the idea of beginning a new kind of inner-city school, called Cristo Rey, that would combine a work program with a strong Jesuit-inspired educational curriculum for disadvantaged students. Because of my work at the original Nativity and the startup Gonzaga Program, Karl told John to speak with me. So John made a trip to the Weston School of Theology (now part of Boston College) where Karl and I were living and studying. John traveled with Sr. Judy Murphy, a Benedictine sister. They were in the beginning stages of discerning a request made by then-Jesuit Provincial Brad Schaeffer for the Jesuits to better serve the Mexican immigrant families living in Chicago’s

Pilsen neighborhood. The idea was to make Jesuit education more accessible through a new high school model that helped students pay for their education through a work-study program.

John, Judy, and I now laugh about this, but when they were describing the new school to me, I was very skeptical. “Why do the white students at Loyola Academy and St. Ignatius College Prep, the Jesuit high schools in the Chicago area, go to school five days a week, and the students from low-income backgrounds go to school only four days a week?” I asked. This was before Cristo Rey had an extended year and an extended school-day schedule. Then I asked John, “Now when these students graduate from Cristo Rey, you’re preparing them to go to Harvard and University of Chicago and Northwestern and Stanford, right?” He responded, “Oh, my God, never, no way.” And I said, “Okay, alright, they’re going to go to Notre Dame and to Georgetown and Santa Clara, right?” And he said, “No, never. That’s just not in the cards for them.” So I said, “All right, they’re going to go to Marquette and Loyola University, aren’t they? And DePaul?” And he said, “No, they won’t be doing that.” So I said, “Well then, John, get out of it. Because we’re Jesuits and we run college preps. This is a crazy idea and it’ll never work.”

Cristo Rey has been easily the most exciting and effective innovation that has happened in Catholic secondary education in the last twenty years. And all these years later many Cristo Rey graduates have gone on to graduate from all of those schools I had mentioned. So I’m willing to admit that if you’re ever looking for someone to predict the success of a trend, don’t ask me!

Cristo Rey, of course, was the beginning of what is now a network of thirty-two Cristo Rey model high schools around the country. I was delighted to be at a ceremony kicking off a new Cristo Rey in Milwaukee, and I’m honored to be on the board of directors of the original Cristo Rey in the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago. And I’m relieved John Foley and Judy Murphy didn’t heed my advice about their idea.



Leadership

Embracing the Good to Which We Are Called

Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.

—BARACK OBAMA

Prior to engaging in post-secondary education, I served from 2002 to 2011 as president of Loyola School, a Jesuit high school on Manhattan's Upper East Side. As I mentioned earlier, during my tenure we were able to move the school forward in new ways while honoring its history and distinctive Jesuit and Catholic identity. The experience taught me a great deal about leadership and about my own leadership style in particular. If I had to boil it down, my leadership hinges on three main maxims.

The first maxim is knowing when to leave and to leave them wanting more. The celebration of my final vows (ultimate confirmation of membership in the Society of Jesus) on Ascension Thursday in early June 2011 served as my farewell from Loyola. It was very emotional but also affirming and wonderful. I felt I was leaving Loyola in very good shape. The kindness and support I experienced at Loyola combined powerfully with the many friendships I experienced through decades of ministry in New York. Consequently, my final vows in 2011, along with my first mass back in 1998, both at the Church of St. Ignatius Loyola in Manhattan, are spiritual and personal highlights for which I will always be deeply grateful. The liturgy of the final vows, attended by over a thousand people from various chapters of my life, felt movie-like. And, in terms of Loyola School, I left them wanting

more. But it was time for me to move on to a new assignment. Accompanied by a dedicated community of students, colleagues, parents, alumni, and trustees, I had completed my assignment. I also finally had completed my doctorate at Teacher's College at Columbia University the previous April, and after prayer and discernment I had told my provincial superior I felt called to transition to administration in higher education.

The second maxim I strive to live by is that effective leadership is about paying attention to the right thing at the right time. My Jesuit friend Bob Reiser is a master at this. As president of McQuaid Jesuit High School in Rochester, New York, and before that as president at St. Peter's Prep in New Jersey, Bob has exhibited outstanding leadership by knowing where and when to focus his attention. Another Jesuit friend, Damian O'Connell, has taught me to recognize that there are many goods competing for our energy and attention, attempting to lay claims on us, and that one needs to ask, "What is the good to which I'm called?"

When I moved from teaching, which I truly loved, to respond to the call to serve in administration, I was very aware that I would have less immediate connection with students and the powerful daily formation that happens between students and their instructors. To accept the call I had to make some sacrifices so that I could focus my attention on collaborating with and contributing to a team that is moving an institution forward.

The third maxim that informs my leadership is that building the right team is the key to success, no matter what the task at hand is. This was a challenge I needed to address when I became president at Loyola in 2002, both internally and on the board level.

Eventually, with high-performing trustees and outstanding administrators in place, Loyola changed for the better. Three key hires advanced Loyola so that the school incarnated the book everyone seemed to be reading at that time, Jim Collins's *Good to Great*. Jim Lyness, long-time Loyola faculty leader and math

department chair, returned to Loyola two years into my term and served as our academic head, or headmaster. Jim was and is an outstanding leader and deeply committed to Jesuit education and to inculcating the “grad at grad,” a summary of the five characteristics of a graduate of a Jesuit high school at the time of graduation: open to growth, academic excellence, religious, loving, and committed to doing justice. Susan Conniff began in 2003 as our vice president for finance and was my “good right hand” in many ways. Susan’s previous experience in finance at JP Morgan and her incredible work ethic so professionalized our business office that it served as a model for other Jesuit and independent school finance operations. Tony Oroszlany, a graduate of Loyola School, returned to his alma mater in 2003 as the vice president for advancement and is now the school’s president. Smart and savvy, sensitive and pastoral, Tony was a “utility player” and a pleasure to work with. We worked very well together; Tony, thoughtful, careful, a researcher able to focus; and I, with my extroverted, risk-taking personality.

When we would ask individuals or couples or foundations for their financial support, Tony offered what I called “the stats,” the financial perspective, while I gave “the story,” describing the students, the need, the mission. Because of Tony’s versatility, sometimes we would flip our routine. Tony attended Loyola on a scholarship, so he could share his experience of the school’s impact on him. During my tenure at Loyola I befriended several other school presidents and heads and served on boards, which afforded me the opportunity to learn about best practices and how they might be adapted at Loyola, which I often discussed with prospective donors. Tony and I met and solicited support from many donors, but we were much more effective when our styles complemented each other’s and we went on an “ask” together. The lessons I learned from the leadership team at Loyola School remain a driving force for me in my leadership of Arrupe College.

The main challenge at Arrupe is that we are creating a culture somewhat out of thin air. While Arrupe is a college within Loyola University Chicago, a very well-established educational institution that has been in existence since 1870, Arrupe is also brand new. For example, when someone suggests talking to our campus partners to address an issue, the reality is that our campus partners are accustomed to working with students who have ACT scores of 27 and GPAs of 3.7. Our students have an average ACT score of 18 and an average GPA of 2.5. So what works for some of our campus partners at Loyola does not work, or needs to be adapted, for Arrupe. My colleagues at Arrupe, especially our two associate deans, Jennie Boyle and Yolanda Golden, have exercised great sensitivity in adapting best practices at Loyola University to the needs and realities of Arrupe College.

Having Jennie Boyle as associate dean for academics and Yolanda Golden as associate dean for student success allows me to be externally focused, which I enjoy and find stimulating. A big part of that focus is fundraising. During Arrupe's first year we needed to raise about one million dollars. We supported thirty-five undocumented students, who were not receiving federal and state aid—approximately \$10,000 per student. So we had to raise \$350,000 for those students alone. We created a breakfast and lunch program at a cost of \$150,000. We also give each of our students a laptop. That's over \$100,000. And we give all of our students the opportunity to participate in the summer enrichment program, which again costs over \$100,000. Assistance for immigrants, predictable and nutritious breakfasts and lunches, laptops, orientation (summer enrichment program)—these are what I call baseline services—the minimum students need in order to be successful at Arrupe, or anywhere. The baseline services added up. Providence occurred when a friend from New York, newlywed Maggie Murphy Stockson, moved to Chicago and expressed interest in working at Arrupe. As our assistant

dean for advancement, Maggie drives our fund-raising efforts with passion and grace.

A big part of fundraising is saying thank you. I enjoy writing our donor-acknowledgment letters and have become well known through the years for crafting them myself with concrete examples of what's going on at the institutions I'm serving. At Arrupe, I might describe a scene of a class I observed or perhaps the achievement of a student. In one particular letter I spoke about our students preparing to make a retreat. Our retreat program at Arrupe is made possible because of a \$100,000 donation we received from a foundation and is facilitated by one of our board members. I sign every letter, whether the gift is for \$25 or \$500,000. I usually scribble a personal message as well, indicating our gratitude for the donor's generosity.

I engage in similar practices with our students. Writing and receiving letters with handwritten messages is becoming archaic in our era of texts and tweets. Such letters, because they are going the way of all things, also capture one's attention, so I sign and send letters via "snail mail" to all students earning a GPA of 3.5 and meriting a place on the dean's list. I congratulate the students on their grades, and then I exhort them to continue their great work in their upcoming classes. Yes, it takes a lot of time to look at each student's record to see what courses the student took during the last semester and is enrolled in this semester, but it's worth it. Why? It demonstrates to the student that we are paying attention. It shows that we are interested in the student. It contributes to the culture of *cura personalis*.

On Super Bowl Sunday, February 7, 2016, I presided at the 5:00 p.m. mass at Saints Faith, Hope, and Charity Parish in Winnetka, just north of Chicago. As usual, I took the opportunity to preach about Arrupe College. The gospel reading that day was Luke 5:1–11, which has been an important passage to me for several years now, reminding me that God meets us where we are. It's the one where Jesus meets Peter, James, and John where

they are fishing but find their nets empty. Jesus requests that they lower their nets once again, and their nets become so full they are about to burst.

This image of full nets guided—or in keeping with nautical imagery, anchored—my tertianship experience in 2009 and 2010, as I completed the final phase of my Jesuit formation. At that time I was looking ahead to completing my term as Loyola School's president in Manhattan. I was uncertain about what would be next but had the sense that God had in store for me another experience of very full nets. I felt as though those nets had been full where my tenure was defined by three things: honoring the past, building community, and professionalizing the culture.

I thought that my nets would be full when, after tertianship, I moved on to the University of San Francisco (USF), a very good move for me in many ways. USF was the site of my transition from secondary education administration to higher education. While leaving New York, where I had worked for thirty years, was difficult, San Francisco seems to be everyone's favorite city. It was a place I really liked and still like very much. And yet I was only at USF for three years before responding to an unexpected call to try again for full nets somewhere else, when I answered the call by Mike Garanzini to serve as the founding dean of Arrupe College.