

JustSouth Monthly

JSRI Perspectives on FAITH DOING JUSTICE



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Ingratitude

What Ignatius had to say

by Fred Kammer, SJ

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JSRI Upcoming Events

December 1-2
Fr. Kammer will co-lead the Ministry Leadership Formation program on Catholic Social Teaching for Christus Health in Dallas.

JSRI Recent Activities

November 17
Fr. Kammer led a session on social justice for new faculty in the Ignatian Pedagogy Seminar.

November 16-17
Dr. Weishar was interviewed by [WGNO News](#), [New Orleans Times Picayune](#) and [WVUE](#) about resettling Syrian refugees.

November 10
Dr. Weishar joined a demonstration led by Stand for Dignity in front of the New Orleans food stamp office to protest Louisiana's denial of food stamps to 65,000 people.

November 10
Dr. Weishar, Fr. Kammer, and

As we prepare to celebrate our national Thanksgiving holiday, who better to turn to than Ignatius of Loyola for a Thanksgiving insight that has both personal and public implications. Ignatius wrote this in a letter:

"It seems to me in the light of the Divine Goodness, although others may think differently, that ingratitude is the most abominable of sins and that it should be detested in the sight of our Creator and Lord by all of His creatures who are capable of enjoying His divine and everlasting glory. For it is a forgetting of the gracious benefits and blessings received." [1]

As we gather around our family tables across the country, many of us will allude to the gifts we have received as individuals and families, as well as the freedoms pledged in our nation's foundational documents (but not yet fully realized for millions of us). We recognize that ingratitude is somehow beneath us, especially as we view the millions of the world's refugees, those dying in Middle East wars, the dead and wounded in recent Paris attacks, and hundreds of millions without enough to eat.



Ignatius, however, went on in the very next sentence to place ingratitude at the center of the world's evil:

"As such it is the cause, beginning, and origin of all sins and misfortunes. On the contrary, the sweetest acknowledgment of blessings and gifts received is found

Teach-In on Migration at St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Church.

What might Ignatius think of contemporary ingratitude playing out in this nation and the world today when people:

November 2

Fr. Kammer led a day of reflection for staff of Catholic Charities in Yakima, WA.

- urge the expulsion of millions of immigrants whose labor brings much of the food to our Thanksgiving table?
- replace gratitude for the marvelous wonders of our earthly common home with trashing it in what Pope Francis calls “the tragic effects of environmental degradation”[2] ?
- prosper due to the labors of previous generations of humanity and now turn their deaf ears to the needs of the generations that will follow us?
- continue to consume at a level which cannot be sustained, deepening what Pope Francis calls the “ecological debt” [3] between the global north and the global south?
- relish political philosophies that tout the individualism of the self-made man or woman and forget that the very languages we speak, ideas we share, education we experience, roads we drive on, and even the internet are social products?
- enjoy the prosperity of this country and forget how much of its wealth grew from the labor of slaves and the sweat of more recent generations of underpaid workers?
- and, in this city and state, forget the dreadful and dangerous work of immigrant workers who restored and rebuilt our homes and businesses in the wake of Hurricane Katrina?

October 29-30

Dr. Sue Weishar attended the annual meeting of the Jesuit Network on Migration in San Salvador, El Salvador.

October 26

Fr. Kammer led an audio conference call on Catholic Social Thought for alumni of the Ignatian Colleagues Program.

October 23

Fr. Kammer addressed Catholic Social Thought at the University of Dallas Ministry Conference.

October 18-20

Fr. Kammer gave three talks on social analysis to the East Coast Jesuit Social Ministries in NJ.

October 16

Dr. Weishar and Service Learning students met with immigrant fasters supporting the President’s Executive Action on immigration.

Yes, we have much to be grateful for this Thanksgiving!

[1] Ignatius Loyola in Letters, No. 55. The Letters of St. Ignatius of Loyola, translated by William J. Young, S.J., Chicago, 1959

[2] Pope Francis, Laudato Si, May 24, 2015, no. 13.

[3] Ibid, no. 51.

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