

Getting Free to Serve

It's fun to look at things from a different perspective, if you can give yourself permission to do so. All of life is an education, and when we are in the midst of changes, it gives us a unique opportunity to reflect, reassess, and remember. The service program at Xavier has been robust and meaningful. Much good has been accomplished for both the giver and the receiver. And, once we make it through to the other side of these current challenges, I'm sure we will pick up the service program right where we left off with it, or will we?

This novel coronavirus pandemic has given us an opportunity to try on a new perspective (or better, an old one) about serving others. It gives us a chance to remember why we serve others in the first place. Serving others is best when it comes from the heart. Service from the heart allows the giver to feel what *goodness* is. Likewise, it allows the receiver to experience what love feels like. Between the two participants, they knit together a special human solidarity that animates *dignity*.

The present time invites us to reflect on the *spirit* of service. Remember when we were little kids, and we just wanted to be "the helper?" There wasn't any goal, requirement, or reward for helping out; we just felt good when we helped someone. We were humbled and proud at the same time. We smiled and beamed.

To that end, and at this time, we would like you to "get free to serve." This means that we have a unique opportunity to not look at service as a checklist item for a graduation requirement. Rather, we have been given the grace to remember that service is a choice to experience what goodness is. We would like to invite you to think about that opportunity: No requirement for logged hours. No mandated semester goal. We would like you to take out the trash (if that feels like an opportunity for you to experience goodness), to clean your room (and maybe your sibling's room, too), to write love letters long overdue to your family members, to choose patience and humility when you don't feel like it, and to spend time investigating your faith and examine how God (the spirit of love) is at work in your life. This is a time to enjoy doing something special for someone, even though you aren't required to. If you would like a recommended goal, fine, shoot for 20 hours of doing nice things this semester, but only do them if you really want to. Get free from the requirements. You already get an A.

Just to be perfectly clear, there are no service hour requirements for students until further notice. Don't panic. Relax. There is no trick up our sleeves or secret "double requirement" later. No service hours are required at this time. However, if you do choose to serve in some way, do so from a genuine "get to," not "have to" motivation. Allow yourself to feel the *spirit of goodness* while giving dignity to those who may need a little help. "Who wants to be a helper?"

Jeff Lethcoe

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