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Remarks of Marianne Gauss

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Marianne Gauss

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I want to thank my colleagues for making my head spin a bit. I knew what they were going to say, and I am still reeling. Hopefully, the rest of you both listen better than I and can assimilate information more quickly than I.

My response, then, is to try to sort things out a bit. Three major themes seemed a good way to organize myself.

The first is that Faith, Community and Service **are integrated.**

Each of these women is very different and came at the topic from different directions, yet what struck me was that the concepts are all so intertwined. No one could truly speak of their assigned category in a discrete way.

Fran was to discuss Faith. But she then went on to describe the way faith led her and many others to service in the community.

TiRease described the community. She then talked about wide variety of Faiths in our community and then discussed individual who live in our community and are so generous with themselves.

Huntly's section was Service. But she started with her initial perception of La Salle as a place that had a strong "moral compass". She sends her students to the community to learn.

None of these ideas can be examined in a vacuum. They are interconnected as it is artificial to suggest otherwise. " Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. " in the second book of James.

My second idea is that they each very hard.

Service is a giving of yourself... that's work. The hardest service is really hard. And service because others need your help, but not because you'll be thanked, is really hard. It can be frustrating, it can be messy and many times it can be heart wrenching. Tutoring a child, coming to love them and then realizing that you cannot actually fix the most significant of the underlying problems for this child is heart wrenching. Helping our students to become adult members of the community and then watching them graduate is wonderful, but come August, you need to start to educate a whole new group of freshmen to be engaged and useful members of this community. That's frustrating. And frankly, some of Fran's examples terrified me.

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Community is hard. I started my life in a small row house in Olney. I shared my room with my four sisters. (My brother, the Prince, had his own room.) Trust me, community is hard. But the richest relationships I have are with my sisters. It just takes work. The Christian Brothers take a vow of "Association." Circular 477 states The Brothers need to question themselves continually on how, in practice, they are associated among themselves, so that this association may be a source of nourishment for them, and stimulate their growth as persons, their solidarity with others, and their listening to what God says about the community mission, the educational service of the poor, the reason for their association" How lucky are we to being in an environment where we the ethos is that we're in this together. The work that we do, "the educational service of the poor" is really hard work, and when we are most stressed, it can be lonely.

And then there's Faith. For me, that is often the hardest. Most of my schooling has asked me to question, to measure, to calculate. I was taught not to accept things without data, hard data. And faith is the antithesis of this. In our culture, we struggle to discuss Faith. And personally, Faith can be very confused by "religion." Yet, we live in a city with a long history of faith based institutions, varied but vibrant institutions. How can they help us to nurture our faith? How can we continue to work on keeping the conversation with our God alive?

Third theme, each theme called us to act.

We are so fortunate to be on a campus where we have the space to pray, where we are called to pray. We are also lucky that the call is not a litmus test, where only one prayer is acceptable. The Brothers have always welcomed seekers. They didn't limit themselves to only Catholic believers. *We need to continue to help one another exercise our faith.* The pilgrimage, only a little over a week ago, was a fascinating way for us to continue to reach out to others and invite them to be with us.

In considering community, we need to act. For some of us, it could simply be leaving our offices once in a while. Maybe we just need to challenge ourselves to simply take advantage of the programs that are sponsored. Maybe we just need to invite a colleague to coffee. And then we need to consider the size of our community. You can start with your division, your department. Given tonight's theme, though, you need to consider our city, our geographic region. How can you be a person engaged with this community?

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And as Lasallians, the community is even larger. We have alumni all over the world. I actually received an e-mail this morning from Lagos Nigeria. This time last week, I was in Minneapolis attending the International Symposium on Lasallian Research. *I heard a colleague of ours, from Bethlehem University in Palestine discuss Human Genetics, A student from Manhattan College discuss sustain energy sources another discuss a study of twentieth century immigrant assimilation, and research on Globospiramine, (anti-alzheimer, anti cancer alkaloid) colleagues from Germany, Chicago, Phillipines who collaborated on this study. These are a few examples from Marianne, the Philadelphian.* So maybe we need to be more deliberate and strategic in connecting with other Lasallians.

Lastly, in relationship to service we need to act. We need to reach out, we need to celebrate and communicate with each other about what we are doing, what the good news is, and where challenges are arising. Through UMAS, here on campus, we have 16 weekly or advocacy based programs, some meet each day. We have 11 service trips, including Project Appalachia which will celebrate its 40th anniversary this year. *In other areas of the campus we have service learning classes, inside out classes As far as the Presidential Honor roll is concerned, all internships, co-op , student teach, field placement and clinical hours count as civic engagement. The University has been awarded the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll every year since it began, serves as a Lead Institution for NASPA and has been recognized by Carnegie Foundation for the advancement of teaching. There are many other things happening on this campus, too. We need to communicate these things to, with and among each other. But not to brag... Frankly we could all use the encouragement, but bragging shouldn't be the end goal. We need to communicate so that we can be strategic, thoughtful and effective. Resources here, for the foreseeable future, will be limited. But the need of the communities we serve seems to be wide and deep. As Huntly mentioned, Philadelphia is the biggest poor city in the US*

We need to stop making excuses. "I'm too busy, I'm not good at that stuff, I'm scared." Virtually everything that Fran does scare me. I have such a strong gag reflex that needles and "body fluids" freak me out. But I can make a bed, I can do laundry, I can sit, hold someone's hand and listen.

In conclusion, we need to pay attention, we need to dig deeper, we need to act, and we need to consider how we will be advocates for all those whose voices are not being heard. We can amplify these voices. Our city is our classroom, we all need to show up and get our work done. It's time to act.