See, Judge, Act: Catholic Social Teaching and Service Learning, revised edition, by Erin M. Brigham (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2018).
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In this revised edition of *See, Judge, Act*, Erin Brigham skillfully updates her substantive yet accessible introduction to Catholic social teaching and praxis. Incorporating newly relevant signs of the times and insights from Pope Francis, this edition offers a preface with valuable pedagogical guidance for those forming students for social change. Together with her community partner, Brigham offers insights into how service learning pedagogy can disrupt standard assumptions and help participants to understand their own well-being as bound up with the flourishing of those whom they encounter. I will continue to use this book in my undergraduate classroom and highly recommend it for others.

—Kristin E. Heyer, Boston College

We will never be able to respond to social crises effectively and ethically unless we study issues of social justice. The first step is to learn how to learn, and this volume provides the key. Erin Brigham taps her impressive experience in service learning to share the methodology of social analysis, along with wise and original insights into complex and disputed issues of social justice. Including the crises of immigration and the environment, the book is even more relevant and urgent than it was when the original edition appeared just a few years ago. This is that rare book that successfully bridges the world of academic theology and hands-on experience. Rooted in the tradition of Catholic social teaching and committed to a pedagogy of engaged learning, this timely and user-friendly volume is a uniquely valuable resource for our time.

—Thomas Massaro, SJ, Fordham University

Professor Erin M. Brigham's book critically explores the intersections of theology, service learning, and the Catholic social tradition for our contemporary context. Her commitment to helping faculty and the next generation learn about both the richness of those intersections and the challenges they present is robust and compelling. Theoretically grounded, empirically invigorating and pedagogically engaging, this book provides faculty a great resource and invites students to a disciplined understanding of what it means to see, judge, and act in a world of great injustices. A debt of gratitude is owed Brigham for the quality of her research and writing, the depth of her community collaboration, and the clarity of her pedagogical awareness that are so clearly evident in this searching and graceful book.

—Kathleen Maas Weigert, Loyola University Chicago

The new edition of *See, Judge, Act* is a splendid introduction to the rich heritage of modern Catholic social teaching. Even more, in the spirit of Pope Francis's pastoral theology, it offers an invaluable guide to *living* the tradition in the context of service learning. Here teaching and learning go hand in hand: following the hermeneutical logic of the pastoral circle or spiral in responding to the "signs of the times," Prof. Brigham brings the wisdom of a vital tradition to bear on such critical issues as poverty, migration, workers' rights, white privilege and racial and ethnic bias, solidarity in peacemaking, and the global ecological crisis. Deserving a wide readership, especially in these contentious times, Brigham's new *See, Judge, Act* gives us reason to hope that the Church's social teaching will cease to be our "best-kept secret."

—William O'Neill, Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University

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Like many faculty members, I started teaching a service-learning course with great intentions but with little knowledge about how to make service learning successful. I have been fortunate to learn from dedicated community partners, especially the Faithful Fools Street Ministry. I have also relied on the resources of USF's Leo T. McCarthy Center for Public Service and the Common Good. David Donahue, Julie Reed, Star Moore, Andrea Wise, and the student Advocates for Community Engagement have influenced my approach to service learning and have helped me work through a number of service-learning dilemmas over the years.

I would also like to thank my students of Catholic social thought, who have taught me the most about the value of service learning. I have watched students begin the class with a fear of leaving campus and finish the semester with a real appreciation for one of the overlooked communities in San Francisco—communities that tourists often miss but that bring so much life to this great city. It is truly a privilege to witness the transformative potential of education.

Finally, I want to thank my husband, Dana Wolfe. Every challenge is easier and every accomplishment is sweeter since I found a great partner.

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SEE, JUDGE, ACT

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND SERVICE LEARNING

REVISED EDITION

ERIN M. BRIGHAM

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Foreword

Paul J. Fitzgerald, SJ, President, University of San Francisco

Undergraduate students at a Catholic university can either learn about theology or they can learn to theologize. The former is a valuable endeavor of appropriation of the thought of many great minds that have carried a tradition forward. The latter is the inescapable obligation of a person whose own faith has come alive.

One quite promising way to awaken a "faith that does justice" is to be found in this book. Students will indeed learn about a coherent body of teaching collectively referred to as Catholic social thought. By doing so in the context of a service-learning course, students are invited and empowered to appropriate the undergirding insights of that tradition, its inner dynamism, in such a way as to become practitioners, theologians, themselves. Alternating, as this book does, between the classroom and the social service agency affords students the possibility to become participant observers and partners in sustained dialogues that support a common exploration of the social obligations that arise from faith.

Theologizing in the context of the urban poor requires that students be willing to discover and consider carefully their own biases and be willing to bracket them as they seek to see social reality through new frames, from new vantage points. As St. Anselm continues to remind us, theology is faith seeking understanding, and ever more so, we know that this search takes place in complex social contexts. Student participation in communities of the urban poor is both limiting and freeing at the same time. Students quickly come to understand that a person's point of view is always partial, always biased, for there is no Archimedean point, no vantage outside of social reality to afford us an objective view of ourselves and our world. We can only view reality from within a life-world, and we can only hope to make our view more generous, and critique our biases, if and as we move thoughtfully, respectfully, and with an open mind into

other life-worlds. Perhaps we can venture no further than the border areas of these new-to-us life-worlds. Modesty and candor impose on us the admission that we cannot be fully at home in multiple cultural worlds, but we can at least be a respectful guest in the life-world of the urban poor. Through engaging multiple perspectives, and especially the perspective of the poor, we can gain a more catholic view, a more nuanced and complex view, and thereby a greater understanding of a truth beyond ourselves, a truth that attracts and impels us, a truth that grasps us fully even as we only grasp at it.

To do theology in the context of marginalized communities liberates us, changing our concerns and suggesting new avenues of exploration. When we purposefully read scripture from the point of view of the homeless family we have come to know through a service-learning placement, new levels of meaning appear in the text. Teachers in this learning context must be willing guides to their students, helping them to surface and set aside previously learned theories, assumptions, and premises that are no longer adequate to the task of theologizing in this new context. This can be jarring to students. They can experience this shattering of their prior conceptual framework as a crisis. Yet it is in moments of crisis that we are free to construct a new synthesis of theory and practice. This allows us to see far more clearly the reality in front of us, judge in a far more nuanced way what we must do, and act far more intentionally in that undertaking.

Preface to Revised Edition
Letter to Educators

Erin Brigham, University of San Francisco
Sam Dennison, Faithful Fools Street Ministry

Discussions about service learning tend to focus solely on what students are supposed to learn and how. The experience for all involved, however, becomes richer when faculty, students, and community members—each with a unique perspective—form a learning community. Since 2014, we, Erin Brigham and Sam Dennison, have been partners in offering the course "Women, Poverty, and Catholic Social Thought." Both of us have facilitated service learning in a variety of formats. Some formats have been more successful than others. In this letter to educators, we highlight some things we have learned about crafting service-learning experiences.

The Partnership and the Course

Erin Brigham and Sam Dennison

The course "Women, Poverty, and Catholic Social Thought" examines gender and intersectional identities in the context of poverty and other social inequalities. Working alongside Faithful Fools Street Ministry, students meet daily for three weeks in the Tenderloin—a condensed and densely populated San Francisco neighborhood. Faithful Fools is a small, nonprofit organization: two full-time staff, a few full-time and many part-time volunteers. The staff live and work in an economically impoverished neighborhood in a very wealthy city. Their mission statement calls them to be present and meet people where they are. The specifics of what the Fools provide—art programs, advocacy, direct service, and so on—varies depending upon who shows up—outside volunteers or neighbors in the Tenderloin

or both. With education being a primary focus of the Fools, a key offering is the Street Retreat, in which participants are invited to spend a day walking through the neighborhood of the Tenderloin with intentionality, reflecting on oneself and one's relationship to the surrounding community.

Faithful Fools and Street Retreats

Sam Dennison

Faithful Fools Street Ministry is a live/work nonprofit in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco. Everything the ministry does is about growing relationships and community. From poetry writing to community advocacy, each action is a time to build respect and trust. The ministry welcomes everyone and focuses on each person's talents and worth.

Street Retreats are the founding act of Faithful Fools. From the very beginning, this practice has helped people reflect upon the assumptions, fears, and experiences that influence their day-in and day-out interactions in the Tenderloin. Faithful Fools began doing Street Retreats in June 1998. Since then nearly 6,000 people (ranging in age from 13 to 83) have spent all or part of a day engaged with the Tenderloin, not as the object of a guided tour, but as a retreat center. This practice has enabled people to form relationships and recognize their common humanity. It has also built a foundation for shared learning and practice. The streets level people. We all make contact with the sidewalk, if only for a moment as we leave our front doors; we are all on the same plane, none higher, none lower than another. Not only is the Street Retreat Faithful Fools' founding act, it is at the center of the Fools' ministry. Faithful Fools' mission statement says "we discover on the streets our common humanity." Learn more about the Faithful Fools Street Ministry at *www.faithfulfools.org*.

The course engages students in reading and discussion of texts on theories of justice and intersectionality along with Catholic theology and Catholic social teaching. Those ideas become contextualized

through activities and conversations with residents of the neighborhood. A primary pedagogical tool is the students' ongoing reflection on their experience in the community and within themselves as they walk the streets for a period of time each day. As their final project, students are invited to create a booklet in which they summarize, synthesize, and collaboratively arrange quotes from reflection papers and texts, original works of art, poetry, and narrative.

Promising Practices—A Faculty Perspective

Erin Brigham

Strong partnerships are key to successful service learning. My relationship to the Faithful Fools began with my own street retreat and has evolved over years of contact, commitment, and collaboration. Participating in the activities of the community partner, developing a deeper understanding of the context of learning, and maintaining regular communication are key to developing strong partnerships. The first time I taught the course, I designed the syllabus on my own and missed the opportunity to harness the wisdom and resources of the community partner to engage students. By the third time, the topics, immersion experiences, and assignments emerged out of a shared syllabus and multiple conversations with the community partner.

As a result, diverse activities were integrated into the course that augmented the academic content and contributed to multiple dimensions of student learning. These included an experience with Theater of the Oppressed[1] that prepared students to attend a public hearing involving a dispute between a group of Catholic nuns running a dining hall for low-income families and members of an adjacent homeowner's association. Students also had the opportunity to meet community organizers working for empowerment with residents of the Tenderloin seeking to exercise their right to vote. A number of students identified these experiences as key learning moments in the course.

1. Influenced by educator Paulo Freire and developed by Brazilian theater director Augusto Boal, this form of theater is designed to promote social change. Audience members are active participants, using their bodies to represent social realities, conflicts, feelings, and experiences. Forms of Theater of the Oppressed are used throughout the world to promote problem-solving, conflict resolution, community organizing, and activism.

Service learning invites collaboration and flexibility. Working with the Fools has disabused me of the perception that I can or should control the learning in the class. Faculty are challenged with the task of discerning when to be flexible with the content of the course and when to redirect the readings, conversation, and experiences toward the learning outcomes of the syllabus. Thinking back on the first time I taught the course, I found myself trying to create a traditional classroom experience on-site with the community partner. What I realized over time is that community engagement offers unforeseen opportunities for learning and sometimes this requires detours from the syllabus.

For example, as a result of the service-learning experiences, the course on women and poverty involved more reading and discussion around race than I had anticipated when creating the course. Students watched the documentary *13th* and participated in a workshop on harm reduction,[2] which generated interest among the students to go deeper into the reality of racism. Rather than detracting from the learning outcomes, this deepened engagement around theories of justice, intersectionality, and Catholic social thought.

In a service-learning course, everyone teaches and learns together through reflection. In a service-learning course in particular, the curriculum goes beyond the expertise of faculty. Learning that involves self-examination with respect to one's assumptions, beliefs, and values in relationship to observations in the community breaks down the roles of teacher and learner. Effective reflection makes concrete connections between the academic content and students' experiences in the community.

Just as students must be challenged to reflect on the systemic and structural dimensions of the issues they encounter as well as their biases and stereotypes that are surfaced, faculty members are also challenged to continually examine their relationship to the community. I have integrated the practice of keeping a teaching journal to reflect on my experiences during the course and my own growth in solidarity with the community. The course on women and poverty

2. Harm reduction offers strategies aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with certain behaviors such as drug use. A number of advocates of Harm Reduction see it as a way to promote the dignity and rights of people who use drugs while minimizing the harm to individuals and communities.

integrated reflection in a number of ways—classroom discussion and writing assignments on specific questions related to the reading and service. The final project of creating the booklet engaged student creativity and affectivity and challenged students to identify the most meaningful learning outcomes from the course.

Institutional support promotes sustainable and effective service learning. Proponents of service learning advocate for institutional commitment in the form of faculty training and incentives as well as the investment of university research and resources in the interest of community partners. At my university, the Leo T. McCarthy Center for Public Service and the Common Good employs leaders in the field of community engagement who train faculty and community partners in best practices and offer ongoing support for service-learning courses. The university also offers an Arrupe Justice Immersion program that provides a stipend for the community partner in recognition of the labor the partner invests in the course.

Successful service learning problematizes traditional models of service. If I have learned anything from working with the Faithful Fools, it is an approach to service that follows relationship. The course created opportunities for students to engage in diverse forms of service. They accompanied community members as participants in a recovery circle. They supported advocacy by participating in a community-organizing effort to empower residents to vote. And they supported meal services by setting up, serving, and cleaning up after meals. The final project highlighted the ways in which students benefitted from the service and grew in awareness of how their own flourishing is connected to the community members they met.

Promising Practices—A Community Partner Perspective

Sam Dennison

Imagine the possibilities beyond service hours. For Faithful Fools, identifying meaningful service learning is a little more difficult than it is for larger agencies like soup kitchens or after-school programs. We do not have standardized volunteer hours that need filling;

rather our programs are constantly changing as the needs around us change. So, at one point in time, we may be providing visual arts and poetry programs and at another helping resident activists to register and mobilize voters. While much of what we do illustrates different aspects of Catholic social thought, the needs of our neighborhood are not such that we can plan on having the same projects or volunteer slots every semester.

Because our needs vary, at times we struggle to meet the needs of service-learning classes. Without regular hours or a structured volunteer program, we are not always able to give students convenient schedules as easily as other service providers often do. But working with Erin and other faculty like her, we have found that we can be creative and look beyond service hours and create deeply satisfying learning experiences that benefit both us and students.

The first thing we do is set aside the idea that we are providing a certain number of hours for students to volunteer. Rather, we look for projects and tasks that compliment what students are doing in the class, and we focus on how we will spend our time together, not how much time is required. In practice, this means that we find ways to work together in small groups and sometimes even one-on-one. The time requirement is determined by the project's need and not the syllabus.

Whatever initiative we are working on, the underlying purpose is to have instructor and students eventually articulate their relationship to us and to our community. The process of reflection from the outset of each service-learning relationship, combined with working together, face-to-face, creates an academic *and* a visceral learning experience. For us, the process of reflection embedded in these relationships is an ongoing source of feedback, insight, and connection. Through this praxis model, built on cycles of action and reflection, we form a community that blends service and learning for all of us. We try to ensure that the task itself is valuable, to be sure, but key for us is the learning through relationship building. It is through relationship that we (students, faculty, and Fools alike) learn about and have an impact on the issues affecting our neighborhood.

Deepening engagement requires commitment and trust. When Erin and I began to work closely on designing this class, I found myself reading the principles of Catholic social thought with

new insights, understanding for the first time that the visceral experiences of our neighborhood and the relationships with the people who live here could change how students think about social injustice as it intersects their own lives.

We focused the class on engaging in the community directly, not abstractly. We began to pair readings with community engagement so that discussions of "Solidarity" or "The Dignity of the Human Person" came alive through both readings and popular education workshops like Theater of the Oppressed.

We also integrated more art into the class because art and creativity are survival tools for many people living in poverty. If students were to understand the complexities of life in our neighborhood, they had to be able to synthesize what they were learning and what they were seeing around them, using the resources (especially making art) that members of the community use to make sense of what is happening to them. So, we had students create a booklet together, with each student contributing a page with words and images depicting what the student had learned. This structure of creative engagement made it possible for us to delve deeply into some difficult issues, including the US history of slavery, mass incarceration, and racism. It also gave students a chance to work directly with community artist-activists.

For all of us—Erin and the Faithful Fools—working together has changed our understanding of both service and learning. We became partners in a deeper sense as we learned to trust each other.

The most meaningful service provokes this question: *How is my well-being bound up with yours?* There is one more thing that has shaped how we Faithful Fools are approaching service learning as a result of these different collaborations. We have become insistent on working together and shaping assignments together well in advance of the first day of class. This is certainly true when we are doing intensive courses like "Women, Poverty, and Catholic Social Thought," but it is also true when we are working within the structure of a semester-long course with specific service-learning requirements, including hours.

What we learned from working with Erin is that a collaborative relationship matters more than anything else. Through collaboration we can take advantage of whatever flexibility is available in a given

class. If it is a class with several community partners, and each student has essentially the same final project—thereby limiting flexibility, we can still shape student expectations and experience by working together early in the process. If there is greater latitude because there are fewer community partners or it is an intensive course, then we can shape assignments more or provide community resources to enhance the course. Whatever the constraints, it is the way that we collaborate that makes the service learning mutually beneficial.

Beyond the essential characteristic of collaboration, we have come to value the content of our work together as well. Over these years of collaboration, we have come to understand that the most meaningful service that students can do in a class on Catholic social thought is to address this question: *How is my well-being bound up with yours?*

This question guides just about everything that we do. It keeps us from distancing ourselves from complexities of the neighborhood or taking the humanity of the people around us for granted. We make sure we are all asking this question—students and community members alike. Sometimes people in our neighborhood dismiss students as privileged and naïve, not realizing how many are first-generation college students or that some have grown up in and out of homeless shelters. Some students come into the neighborhood and find themselves surprised at the number of working families living there or the degree of mutual care among people who are living on the streets. I remember one student's reflection as he worked out his response to this question: "I always thought that people were poor because they did something wrong. It never occurred to me that someone could end up homeless through no fault of their own. Even me or my family could end up homeless."

While his observation may seem on some level terribly naïve, it is also a first step in understanding that we live in a world not of our own making and we are subject to large, sometimes invisible forces. Without moments like this—seeing and understanding how assumptions about fault and blame distance us from the realities of poverty—it is so much harder to understand why we need both compassion and activism if we are seeking to live in a just society.

It is these surprises about how poverty happens and how people end up in places they never expected to (sometimes for better and

sometimes for worse) that make us see the reality of "if it can happen to you, it can happen to me." And if that is so, then my well-being is deeply bound up with yours . . . and your well-being is bound up with mine.

It is always my hope that some version of this question—How is your well-being bound up with mine?—is part of every class. It turns the service into learning and, with a little luck and a little bit of time, it may well turn learning into a life of service. I do not imagine that every service-learning student will take on a life of service, but I do hope that most will carry this sense of connection with them into their careers in marketing or human relations or nursing or physics or engineering. And if they do, perhaps when they are voting or making decisions about who to hire or how to budget or what policies to put into practice, they will remember how their own well-being is bound up with the people around them—in the workplace, in their families, and on the streets.

Resources for Service Learning

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Introduction

The main title of this text repeats a phrase—*see-judge-act*—associated with Belgian Catholic priest Joseph Cardijn, who worked with lay Catholics to connect their faith with social action. During the post–World War I era, an era marked by economic depression, Cardijn reached out to young working-class Catholics by founding the Young Christian Workers (YCW) in 1924.[1] The organization provided a place for laypeople to relate their struggles for justice in the workplace to an emerging tradition of Catholic social thought.[2] Cardijn introduced the process of seeing, judging, and acting in meetings of the YCW to encourage people to observe situations, to evaluate them based on the Gospels, and to act in ways that respond to observed injustices.

The YCW was just one of a number of Catholic associations that mobilized laypeople to address social issues during this era. Others include the Catholic Worker movement founded by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin and Friendship House established by Catherine De Hueck.[3] As the young people involved in the YCW moved on to new phases of life, new types of movements emerged. For example, in 1949, Pat and Patty Crowley founded the Christian Family Movement, which went beyond the earlier movements by encouraging Catholics and adherents of other religions to work together to bring about social justice for families.[4] Cardijn's use of the see-judge-act process with the YCW highlights an important aspect of the Catholic social tradition: everyone—lay and ordained—shares responsibility for social analysis and action.

1. Joseph Willke, "The Worker-Priest Experiment in France," *America* (April, 1984): 253.

2. Ibid.

3. See Marvin Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements* (New London, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1998), 62–72.

4. Ibid., 72.

Pope Francis connects action for justice with the call to holiness that belongs to every follower of Christ. One should not look solely to priests, bishops, nuns, and saints for models of holiness, Francis argues, but to the daily life of everyone building love, justice, and peace in the world.[5] Holiness, in his view, is not about withdrawing from the world or engaging in simple acts of charity. Rather, it involves seeking Christ among the poor and marginalized and working for the social conditions that honor their dignity.[6]

Though the phrase *see-judge-act* emerged in a Catholic context, it describes a process that people use implicitly and explicitly in many different contexts to observe situations, to evaluate them in light of understandings of what is good and right, and to act in ways to improve those situations. History is full of examples of inspiring people who model this process. Civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. observed the social injustices perpetuated by racism in the United States, drew on his faith and values to denounce racism as morally evil, and acted out of his convictions to advocate for racial justice. Nobel Peace Prize recipient Saint Mother Teresa saw the suffering caused by poverty on the streets of Calcutta, reflected on the situation in light of teachings of the Gospels, and responded with compassionate service. Jesuit priest Greg Boyle saw the impact of concentrated gang violence in Los Angeles and was personally transformed by encounters with former gang members. Driven by a faith-filled commitment to human dignity, Fr. Boyle started Homeboy Industries to empower former gang members to escape the cycle of violence and incarceration. Also, consider the college student who observes educational inequalities in her city, evaluates the situation based on her conviction that everyone should have the opportunity to receive a good education, and decides to tutor low-income youth on a regular basis.

This book provides an introduction to both the Catholic social tradition and the process of seeing, judging, and acting. It is designed especially for service-learning courses that invite students to *see* social situations, *judge* them in light of principles drawn from the Catholic

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5. Pope Francis, *Gaudete et exsultate* (*On the Call to Holiness in Today's World*), 2018, no. 14.

6. Ibid., nos. 95–99.

Church's social teaching and from their own values and beliefs, and *act* in response to observed injustices. This introduction will provide an overview of the three steps or stages of the see-judge-act process, discuss the use of the process in conjunction with service learning, and explore the relationship between the process and the Catholic social tradition.

The See-Judge-Act Process

See: Social Analysis

Seeing, or social analysis, goes beyond first impressions, which tend to yield incomplete pictures. An observer's first impressions are often influenced by his or her expectations and assumptions and based on limited information. Consider for example two US college students on a study abroad trip to Manila. When the students see small children begging for money on the street, one points out the failure of the government to provide a safety net for vulnerable citizens and the other student cites the failure of parents to provide for their children. Both judgments uncover assumptions: one about the role of government, the other about the agency of individual families living in poverty.

Catholic social ethicists Peter Henriot and Joe Holland define social analysis as "the effort to obtain a more complete picture of a social situation by exploring its historical and structural relationships."[7] Whereas historical analysis considers how a situation developed and changed over time, structural analysis assesses how structures such as the economy, politics, and social and cultural norms relate to the situation. Social analysts also consider who makes decisions affecting people in the situation and the values underlying those decisions.

Henriot and Holland point out that social situations are complex and that the results of one's analysis are always limited.[8] Despite this limitation, social analysis can help people see a situation more accurately than they could based on impressions, and this analytical

7. Joe Holland and Peter Henriot, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis and Washington, DC: Center of Concern, 1983), 14.

8. Ibid., 15–16.

seeing can lead to more effective judgments and actions. In the previous example, it would be important for the students to understand the local and national policies and initiatives to address poverty as well as the historical and cultural impact of poverty on the community. Furthermore, social analysis would uncover the impact of colonization and dynamics of gender, race, and class within the family and society that influence the observed realities.

Judge: Ethical Reflection

The second step, judging, involves evaluating a situation in light of guiding principles that define what is good and right, which can be drawn from any number of sources—religious doctrine, scriptures, cultural mores, philosophical perspectives, the teachings of inspirational figures. The goal of this step is to formulate a response to a problematic social situation.

Individuals evaluate the data differently, in part, because of differences in their values, priorities, and visions of what is good and right. Judging involves selecting a set of principles to use as criteria for evaluation, but it also involves recognizing that no one approaches a reality as a blank slate and assessing one's own beliefs and values and how they shape one's judgments.

Reflection makes explicit the values, commitments, and beliefs that are constantly shaping how a person relates to the world. In doing so, it challenges people to be cognizant of how they judge what they see and also whether or not what they see in the world *and* how they act in the world conform to their deepest convictions. It might also lead to a transformation of one's convictions based on new experiences and information.

Returning to the students in Manila, it is worth considering the experiences, assumptions, and values that might have influenced their initial judgment. As college students from the United States, each of them enjoys considerable economic and political privilege. Encountering people who lack such privilege, coupled with social analysis and reflection, could prompt the students to evaluate their beliefs and values about the situation. Perhaps the student who applied the value of family responsibility to the situation comes to see how oppression due to class, race, and gender limits one's ability

to protect and provide for one's family. This shift in perspective might prompt her to consider how other principles—solidarity and participation—might lead her to a more effective response.

Act: Charity and Justice

Seeing and judging lead to step three—acting. The concepts of charity and justice help distinguish types of action. Charity responds to people's immediate needs, often for food, shelter, safety, and clothing. It tends to flow from a spirit of altruism and generosity or a feeling of compassion for other people. Justice aims to address the reasons why people are without adequate resources and usually requires long-term collaborative efforts with community members. This is because acting to bring about justice can involve changing systems, policies, and institutions. People who work for justice are often motivated by a sense of obligation to a vision of goodness, justice, and fairness. Charity and justice are not isolated actions and so one's response to a particular situation may involve both. However, distinguishing between charity and justice can be a helpful reminder that each aim is important and incomplete without the other. When charity is seen as a starting point for fostering solidarity, it can be an effective way to promote empathy across social divisions and respond to people's immediate needs. However, charity without justice can ignore the structural inequalities that set up the need for charity in the first place and even reinforce unjust relationships. Later chapters will elaborate more thoroughly on these important concepts.[9]

Service, Learning, and the See-Judge-Act Process

Many people associate the term *service* primarily with charitable acts aimed at meeting immediate needs such as providing meals, clothing, or shelter to people living in poverty. These actions are sometimes referred to as direct service; however, the term *service* in service learning also encompasses actions aimed at bringing about justice. One

9. See also Tom Massaro, *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action*. Second Classroom Edition (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012), chapter 1.

type of justice-oriented service is advocacy, using one's voice to speak on behalf of someone who lacks social, political, and economic influence. For example, someone might serve hotel workers trying to form a union by writing letters to the hotel management in support of the workers' struggle. Justice-oriented service can involve empowering individuals and communities to create structural changes. Service as empowerment might involve educating domestic workers about their rights so they can take legal action if they have experienced exploitation in the form of wage theft or sexual harassment. Take a moment to consider your understanding of the term *service*. How does your understanding relate to direct service, advocacy, and empowerment? How have experiences of providing or receiving various forms of service influenced your perspective?

Preparing for a Service-Learning Course

Particularly in the United States, a context that tends to value and reward volunteerism, service is understood in this framework.[10] Service learning and volunteering, however, are not the same. The distinction is important because each approach promotes a different way of relating to the community. Successful service learning is characterized by reciprocity. In other words, all stakeholders in the relationship (students, educators, and community partners) should benefit from and have a voice in the relationship.

One of the challenges to achieving reciprocity in a service-learning context mirrors the challenge of achieving reciprocity in society—people have unequal access to power, influence, and resources. Such inequalities are often a result of unearned privilege—assets and power that one experiences by belonging to a particular social group. Consider how a woman might avoid walking alone after

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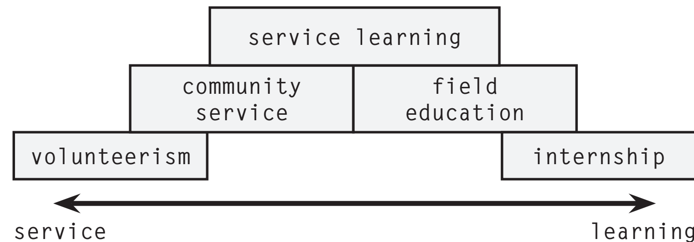
10. Because people commonly associate service with charity and volunteerism some educators prefer the language of community engagement to service. This critique is well developed in Randy Stoecker, *Liberating Service Learning and the Rest of Higher Education Civic Engagement* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2016). I have chosen to retain the language of service learning while rejecting simplistic notions of service, taking instead a more expansive view that includes advocacy, empowerment, and community organizing for social change. For a more detailed discussion of types of service that include advocacy and justice education see Marvin Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements* (New London, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1998).

Spectrum of Activities Related to Service Learning

Andrew Furco locates service learning on a spectrum of activities related to service and experiential education. Unlike volunteering, service learning offers the explicit benefit of achieving learning goals. Unlike an internship, service learning addresses the interests and voice of the community partner. Service learning strives for mutuality, balancing the focus on student learning and the community's interests.[11]



dark out of fear for her safety while her male friends do not experience such restrictions. Or consider how a person of color might surprise a white friend by recalling instances of being stopped and questioned by police officers for no apparent reason.

Volunteering does not necessarily disrupt social inequalities to achieve its purpose. In fact, it may reinforce social inequalities if the volunteer is perceived or perceives herself to have the resources, solutions, and power to address social problems. When service is understood as a way to fulfill an unmet need of the community or remedy a community problem, the primary focus going into the community can be on the need or the problem. This can deflect the student's attention from the community's strengths and resources. John McKnight and John Kretzmann offer a helpful tool to avoid

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11. Andrew Furco, "Service Learning: A Balanced Approach to Experiential Education," in *Introduction to Service-Learning Toolkit: Resources for Faculty* (Providence, RI: Campus Compact, 2001), 10.

focusing on a community's deficiencies. In their model of "Asset-Based Community Development," they suggest empowering communities to identify the resources and skills that already exist in their neighborhoods and building on those strengths.[12] This approach to service is particularly helpful in service learning because it not only empowers the community but it also helps the learner gain a more adequate understanding and appreciation of the community.

Effective service learning challenges social inequalities by evoking critical reflection on the dynamics of privilege and marginalization within the service-learning relationship and within one's own identities. Acknowledging how one has benefitted from social inequalities can be difficult and is often met with puzzlement, denial or guilt. However, this process is essential for imagining how *everyone* benefits from social justice.

Becoming an Ally for Social Justice

Once people recognize their privilege, they can decide to work alongside marginalized groups as an ally. Reflecting on how college students become allies for social justice, Keith Edwards explores how motivation influences the process.[13] It is helpful to examine one's motivation for service learning because it can influence how one sees and relates to the community.

Edwards observes three ways people are motivated to become allies with marginalized communities. Self-interest motivates some people. For example, a person may decide to become an ally because he or she sees how a friend or family member is treated unjustly. Consider how one might stand up for a friend or loved one hurt by a homophobic remark, but not necessarily work to dismantle the roots of homophobia in society. While this might serve as a starting point for empathy that can motivate social change, the danger is that the self-interested ally might focus solely on the experience of their loved one and fail to see the systemic problem behind the unjust treatment.

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12. John L. McKnight and John P. Kretzmann, *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets* (Chicago: ACTA Publications, 1993).

13. Keith Edwards, "Aspiring Social Justice Ally Identity Development: A Conceptual Model," in *NASPA Journal* 43, no. 4 (2006), 39–60.

The second type of ally is motivated by altruism. The altruistic individual wants to help members of oppressed groups because he or she sees the injustice behind social inequalities. This ally might experience discomfort or guilt over his or her privilege, having realized a common humanity with people across social divisions. When one feels guilty, however, one can also become easily defensive. Imagine a service learner who becomes confused and angry when a client is rude to her after she has just served him a meal. As an altruistic ally, she sees herself as giving freely to help a less fortunate individual and expects the other party to treat her with gratitude and respect.

An ally for social justice is motivated not only by the desire to help others but also the conviction that creating a just society benefits everyone, including herself. Edwards uses the language of combined selfishness to explain this motivation, observing how the ally for social justice works alongside marginalized communities to eliminate social inequalities that harm both dominant and oppressed groups. Especially in a context that celebrates altruistic volunteerism, self-interested motivation might seem like a bad thing. However, if one begins with the assumption that people are interdependent, it becomes apparent that everyone is harmed by injustice. This model aligns well with Catholic social thought, which assumes everyone is interdependent because people are social by nature.

When reflecting on ally-identity development, it is important to consider the multiple identities that influence an individual and that person's relationships to various communities. Intersectionality is a concept that refers to the reality that one experiences oneself as a member of multiple social groups at the same time. One's gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, nationality—all interact to influence one's experience of privilege and marginalization. Edwards considers this in his stages of development, pointing out that one may come to see oneself as an ally for social justice and at the same time develop critical consciousness of one's own oppression.[14] For example, in his service-learning experience a Latino man might grow as an ally to women after encountering and reflecting upon sexism while also becoming more aware of how he has been impacted by white dominance. Within a given classroom, as within a given individual,

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14. Ibid., 54.

privilege and power are complex realities influencing how one relates to a community and envisions social justice.

Tips for Becoming an Ally for Social Justice

Blame the system not the individual. An ally for social justice recognizes how social structures advantage some while disadvantaging others. This reality complicates attempts to assign personal responsibility for societal problems.

Do not let guilt be a barrier to growth. An ally for social justice welcomes the opportunity to unmask their own privilege and unconscious biases as a process of their own liberation.

Continue to envision the common good. Recognizing that we are all interdependent, an ally for social justice sees how everyone benefits from transforming unjust social conditions.

See-Judge-Act and the Catholic Social Tradition

In 1961, Pope John XXIII identified in *Mater et magistra* (*Christianity and Social Progress*) the process of seeing, judging, and acting as a way to bring the Church's teachings on social matters to bear in concrete situations.

> The teachings in regard to social matters for the most part are put into effect in the following three stages: first, the actual situation is examined; then, the situation is evaluated carefully in relation to these teachings; then only is it decided what can and should be done in order that the traditional norms may be adapted to circumstances of time and place. These three steps are at times expressed by the three words: *observe, judge, act.* (no. 236)

John XXIII presents Catholic social teaching as a set of norms to apply to specific circumstances. This text is designed to help service learners do just that by moving from universal principles to concrete application. The text presents principles drawn from the Catholic

social tradition and encourages readers to apply them to issues using the methodology of see-judge-act. By presenting Catholic social thought in this way, the text invites students to discover the meaning and significance of this thought in relation to concrete situations they may be familiar with through service learning.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the Catholic social tradition and introduces the Catholic Church's official social teachings. The remaining chapters, 2–8, each features a major principle drawn from these teachings. Designed especially for readers engaged in service learning, the chapters provide information and tools for using the principles of Catholic social teaching as a basis for evaluating unjust situations and identifying actions aimed at promoting justice.