Calvin M Reyes 5/8/12 Fr. Brown Ignatian Spirituality & The Law

## This I Believe

I believe that the characteristics that determine the destiny of any single person are transcended from their family and ingrained in their core.

I began to realize this in my Ignation Spirituality and the Law course during my senior year of undergraduate studies at Loyola University Maryland. During this course I attempted to grasp how spirituality, a subject I was immersed in during high school, and law, a subject I struggled through during college, were related. The point wasn't made clear until reading "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks" by Rebecca Skloot. This book investigated the story of the life of the woman whose cells continue to regenerate themselves even after her death. The book examined this woman's resilience in opposing the struggles of her life. It became clear that her cells exemplified that same resilience and it was the cells that affected the entire medical field. I ask myself about the likelihood that a characteristic of herself could have been embedded in her DNA.

I look to my family for similar examples of how this could take place. My younger brother has been to the emergency room seventeen times, the same amount as years he has lived. The most recent involved a drunk driver clipping him, while on his long board skateboard going up to speeds of 35 miles per hour. He suffered a major concussion and two-part skull fracturing in addition to bruising and abrasions to the rest of his body. The time previous he fell off a cliff while mountain climbing with friends landing on a rock and slicing open his knee on a rock. He received a total of thirty-six stitches on his leg after losing a considerable amount of blood. Other injuries of his include stitches on his bruised lip, another concussions, a broken ankle, two broken noses, a broken middle finger, index finger, ring finger, pinky finger, and thumb.

Despite the injuries my brother has suffered he has healed, not at any superhuman rate, but healed nonetheless. He fears nothing, takes risks, and no matter how many times he falls he gets up. Honorable? Yes, but that's not to say his body's cells will do this after his life has ended proving to be another genetic discovery. But what if his persistence is the characteristic that is intrinsic not just to him, but to my whole family?

My grandmother fled political instability, immigrated the United States, learned a new language, raised two children by herself, put them through school, worked 3 jobs simultaneously, and all with a good disposition. Her son, my father grew up in terrible neighborhood, avoided gang violence in high school, served in the marines, and worked to put himself through the University of Maryland, raise my brother and I, provide us with top tier education, and a safe and secure home. I believe that these characteristics such as perseverance in the face of adversity, and the determination to succeed despite struggles, are

not taught to them but instead instilled in ones genes. I believe that the ability to not just survive but to succeed is a characteristic passed on through ones family.