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I think a lot about how Loyola defines itself: a liberal arts university in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition. These are more than just words. Or, it must be our daily work to make it so. To me, the liberal arts tradition is about taking ideas seriously. My own scholarly field, African American literature, teems with people who take ideas seriously: all men are created equal, ain't I a woman, black lives matter. Injustice is when our experiences fall short of our ideals; a commitment to social justice requires both recognizing and seeking out that dissonance. That is where the Jesuit intellectual tradition intersects: a deep calling to go out into the world and engage. That tradition impels us to encounter the world as it is in all its messiness – to listen, to experience, to learn – and then to work toward changing that world. Thus arises the Ignatian dictum to go forth and set the world on fire. For a less arsonist metaphor, I lean toward the more folksy desire to leave the world a bit better than I found it.

Certainly, these ideals are not uniquely Jesuit. *Any* university deserving of the name thinks of itself as committed to the pursuit of knowledge and social betterment. Still, the Jesuit higher education tradition nurtures some distinct

practices, habits, and shared commitments, which leads to what in the Ignatian tradition is called *magis* and what I have come to think of as a certain *impatience*. Impatience with the pace of change, a restlessness to get out of the classroom and into the world, or a frustration with justice efforts that don't pause to ask big questions about, say, not only experiences of incarceration, but also structures that create a hyper-incarcerated black population in the first place.

So what does this look like in practice? For me, I seek out ways to connect big ideas to lived experience, my own and others, without a desire for hasty answers or easy solutions. The best model I've found is service-learning: connecting intellectual inquiry with community engagement in a mutually beneficial partnership. So, as my students read about the role of literacy in nineteenth-century slave narratives, for instance, I also ask them to partner with a community organization working in the Baltimore City public schools. Our literature from earlier eras becomes urgent while the structures that stunt human possibility in our current world become visible and acquire historical depth. Such inquiry also makes our world smaller, more connected. In the 900-yard walk from Loyola to that Baltimore City school, we experience the radical adjacency of injustice and privilege. To connect these worlds requires the ability to ask big questions and the courage to go forth into unfamiliar territory. That includes for me as a scholar-citizen in the classroom asking big questions of the world for which I don't have all the answers.

So, in the end, where do I – a white, secular, and queer scholar of African American literature – fit in the Jesuit tradition? Rereading my tenure narrative from a few years ago

reminds me of some north stars: "Part of my job," I wrote, "is to advocate for the liberal arts in the twenty-first century, be it nurturing a curriculum that can value intellectual inquiry for its own sake, equipping students to engage the world with not only passion but also insight, sharing research with the public about how literature shapes our lives, participating in student initiatives to become scholar-citizens, and following suit in my own community activities." Now that I am in an institutional leadership position working with faculty, part of my job is to help imagine a Jesuit university big enough so that we can all pursue such work from and with various identities, backgrounds, and faith commitments. And to do so with joy. Or, as anarchist feminist Emma Goldman famously quipped, "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution."