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Living justice at Loyola for me is about listening. When I think about being a woman for and with others, asserting a preferential option for the poor, or standing in solidarity with people who have been marginalized by a system of power that works for the powerful, an image of movement forward and fighting for the Kingdom to come emerges. Although I have been inspired by this image, and it is responsible for the birth of my commitment to social justice, the evolution of my experience of living justice has brought me to taking a deep, still breath and listening.

Listening to one another is essential for authentic relationship and, therefore, is a building block of a just world. Without the art of authentic listening, we risk losing the space for reciprocal power and co-creation. Listening is not a simple task or a bypass around the necessary actions to create a just world. For me listening is a necessary ingredient to any work of justice.

Sometimes I am called to listen to muted voices like those of a woman tortured in El Salvador or a patient sharing her experience of race. Other times I am invited to practice listening without pretense to political rhetoric or challenging

ideas that are different from my own. I also have heard thoughts and experiences of students wrestling with understanding injustice in the space between ignorance and truth. The most courageous listening for me has been a willingness to hear uncomfortable, sometimes critical, responses from colleagues, supervisors, family, and strangers in the moment after I have shared an experience of marginalization or advocated for justice. In each case, this listening is a choice to risk discomfort to welcome someone into relationship, to a seat at the table.

I live justice by offering relationship through a listening ear to all, including “the poor,” “the ignorant,” “the oppressed,” or “the powerful.” Without this invitation based on the recognition of the dignity of every human being, we risk ignoring people on the margins of society or pushing people to the outskirts of a dialogue in which we desperately need them to participate to create change. Listening in a world of polarized political dialogue, worship of efficiency, and discomfort with uncertainty is difficult, but it is crucial to our call to create a more just world. Listening is how I live justice at Loyola.