

June 27, 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers gathered at St. Xavier University,

We are sorry we could not be with you. However as alumnae of St. Xav's, and Sisters of Mercy, we wanted to send a few thoughts which express our personal reflection. We cannot speak for the entire Mercy community since we have not had the opportunity to speak to our leadership or every Mercy Sister. We are speaking from our own lived experience.

The three of us have been Sisters of Mercy for 73, 68, and 61 years. Many of those years have been spent working with the most vulnerable populations, working as women of faith for justice for our sisters and brothers. Catholic Social teaching has been our guide: among those principles are Life and Dignity of the Human Person, Option for the Poor and Vulnerable, The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers, Solidarity. That is why we are, at this time concerned about the situation which has occurred at St. Xavier University, a Mercy, Catholic institution.

Also, the three of us have just completed our annual retreat. Although it was done by zoom, it was a powerful experience on Adult Spirituality. During those 5 days we were thinking about St. Xavier and praying for you. One important word we heard early on in the retreat was the word listen. An image that struck us was of one figure of a person with a big red arrow, leading the way and everyone else following. Or, the image of stone upon stone each stone becoming smaller forming the pyramid – the idea that all comes from the top down and everyone else follows. At this time in our faith we are beyond that. The image where we want to be is that of intertwined circles – dialogue, listening, working together for the best of the whole.

So we want to say that we hope that the Administration and the Union members will see the life and dignity of each human person, the dignity of work and the rights of workers, solidarity, and that knowledge that when we listen, respect, think interlocked circles, that what results is what follows Catholic Social Teaching, Human Dignity, Workers Rights, Solidarity and that the spirit of Mercy and love will bring about what is for the common good of students, staff, faculty, and administration. The closing song of our retreat spoke to this concept also and we want to leave you with a thought from the song. “I will sit beside you but I will not hide you from the pain that engagement may bring. And the chorus was – Round tables where we all are able to sit and share our good wine. Talk our hearts deep longing; see our words shape song in clear voices creating new rhyme. We hope for round tables for the pain that engagement may bring to create something new –something Mercy.

Thank you! Sister Pat M. Murphy, Sister JoAnn Persch, Sister Rita Specht