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Xaverian Brothers spirituality and year of service: a unique transformational leadership opportunity

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XAVERIAN BROTHERS SPIRITUALITY AND YEAR OF SERVICE: A UNIQUE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

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This work is dedicated to my parents for their guidance; my godfather Joseph Casey, S.J. for his continued inspiration; and to the Xaverian Brothers for the significant impact they have had on my life.
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CHAD PUCLOWSKI

Boston University School of Theology, 2017

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ABSTRACT

The Congregation of Saint Francis Xavier is a Catholic, vowed, religious order of laymen. The primary apostolate of the Xaverian Brothers is education, and since vocational vibrancy is in decline many schools do not have any Brothers in residence. This thesis project proposes a service volunteer program that will provide transformational leadership opportunities and create an environment that will develop and deepen the understanding of the lived spirituality of the Xaverian charism within the school community. This is important because it is increasingly likely that lay-faculty, staff, and administrators will become the principal stewards of this charism and spirituality.
# Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations ......................................................................................................................... xii

Chapter 1  The Intersection of Xaverian Spirituality and Transformational Leadership ..... 1

Recent Xaverian Brothers History and an Opportunity ................................................................. 2

Opportunity for Transformation ........................................................................................................ 6

Chapter 2  Xaverian Brothers Charism and Spirituality Contextual Analysis ..................... 10

Historical Context and Development of Charism ............................................................................ 13

The “Ordinary” .................................................................................................................................. 22

Freedom ............................................................................................................................................ 24

Enduring Relationships ...................................................................................................................... 25

Community .......................................................................................................................................... 26

Chapter 3 Literature Review ............................................................................................................. 28

Catholic Spirituality .............................................................................................................................. 29

Magisterial Documents ...................................................................................................................... 29

Catholic Spirituality in Education ...................................................................................................... 32

The Lasallian Brothers ......................................................................................................................... 33

The Society of Jesus ............................................................................................................................ 34

Xaverian Spirituality ............................................................................................................................ 37
The Historians

XBSS Office Synthesis

Enduring Personal Relationships

Stewardship for God’s Creation

Centrality of Religious Instruction, Spiritual Formation, Worship, and Prayer

Centrality of Religious Instruction

Centrality of Prayer, Spiritual Formation, and Worship

A Challenging Educational Program

A Spirit for Harmony

A Passion for Justice and Peace

The Working Papers

Mission

Existing Mission

A Model That Validates and Integrates Existing Mission

Identity

Education

Enduring Personal Relationships

Service

Internal Evangelization
School-As-Institution ................................................................. 118
Office of Sponsorship ............................................................... 119
Xaverian Brothers ...................................................................... 120
Chapter 6 Conclusion .................................................................. 122
Appendix I: Ten Commitments of Lasallian Schools .................... 124
Appendix II: Characteristics of a Jesuit Education ....................... 127
Appendix III: Xaverian Brothers Vision, Spiritual Values, Calls and Goals .................. 129
Appendix IV: Xaverian Mission Statements .................................. 131
Bibliography ................................................................................ 138
Vita ......................................................................................... 143
## List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C.F.X.</td>
<td>C.F.X.: <em>Congregationum Fratorum Xaverianorum</em>, commonly known as the Xaverian Brothers</td>
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<td>F.S.C.</td>
<td>F.S.C.: <em>Fratres Scholarum Christianarum</em>, commonly known as Brothers of the Christian Schools, also known as the Lasallian Brothers or Christian Brothers</td>
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<tr>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Lowell Catholic, Lowell, MA</td>
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<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Malden Catholic High School, Malden, MA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSJ</td>
<td>Mount Saint Joseph High School, Baltimore, MD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLGc</td>
<td>Our Lady of Good Counsel, Olney, MD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBS</td>
<td>Saint Bernard's School, Uncasville, CT</td>
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<tr>
<td>S.J.</td>
<td>S.J.: <em>Societas Iesu</em>, commonly known as the Jesuits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJS</td>
<td>Saint John's High School, Shrewsbury, MA</td>
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<tr>
<td>XBHS</td>
<td>XBHS: Xaverian Brothers High School, Westwood, MA</td>
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<td>XBSS</td>
<td>XBSS: Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>XBSS Office</td>
<td>XBSS Office; Office of Sponsorship for Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools</td>
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<td>XBSS Retreat</td>
<td>XBSS Retreat: Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools Retreat</td>
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<tr>
<td>XHS</td>
<td>XHS: Xaverian High School, Brooklyn, NY</td>
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Chapter 1
The Intersection of Xaverian Spirituality and Transformational Leadership

I attended a Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School and returned to work there as a teacher and campus minister. While my career path was intended to be veterinary medicine, I found myself inexorably drawn to teaching and to the spirituality lived by the Xaverian Brothers. I think my connection to Xaverian spirituality is what encouraged me to enter the Jesuits. While my time in the novitiate ended following the spiritual exercises, I believe that the exposure to Jesuit spirituality has helped me better understand and appreciate the impact that Xaverian spirituality has had on my own life. In my context as a campus minister and teacher, I also recognize the uniqueness of the Xaverian charism and the manner in which it has had a transformational impact on many other individuals.

The Congregation of St. Francis Xavier (C.F.X.), better known as the Xaverian Brothers, is a consecrated, male layperson missionary order within the Catholic Church. It was founded by Theodore James Ryken in 1839 and is now responsible for the oversight of thirteen American high schools, ranging up the east coast of the United States from Louisville, Kentucky to Lowell, Massachusetts. Considerable progress has been made in understanding the history and unique charism and spirituality of the Xaverian Brothers since the mandate of the Second
Vatican Council’s *Perfectae Caritatis.* However, the sum of Xaverian Brothers globally has been in decline as well as the number of Brothers stationed apostolically in the schools.

The decline in the number of vocations has undermined the existence of Xaverian spirituality as an implicitly lived reality demonstrated exclusively by the Xaverian Brothers. Since this charism is at the heart of the spiritual and educational philosophy of the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools (XBSS), the unique character of a Xaverian education and the spiritual and academic benefits it conveys is subsequently at risk. Most of the thirteen schools are now staffed and administrated primarily by secular laypeople, most educated to some extent in the mission and charism of the Xaverian Brothers, but without the formational components that would come with membership as a vowed brother. The intentional and continued integration of these constituents is crucial to maintain the original missional and spiritual identity.

**Recent Xaverian Brothers History and an Opportunity**

As early as the 1970’s, the Xaverian Brothers became aware of the challenge posed by sluggish vocational vibrancy and began to implement special programing meant to curb this trend. An important example is the Xaverian Leadership Institute at Xaverian Brothers High School and its various iterations in

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the northern Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools. This Institute has become a flagship retreat at all seven northern schools, used to impart transformational leadership techniques and Xaverian spirituality to rising seniors. In addition, the Office of Sponsorship for Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools (XBSS Office) was created in direct response to the numerical decline of the Brothers. The Office now runs a wide range of programming.

The XBSS Office offers extensive programing that includes orientation to the Xaverian Way for new faculty, retreats and seminars for administration and veteran faculty, and a week-long retreat that brings together over one hundred student retreatants selected from each of the thirteen schools. As extensive as these options already are, this is not sufficient to maintain the Xaverian charism and develop and maintain transformational leadership opportunities. In many cases the faculty, staff, and administration are, or soon will be, the only stewards and imparters of the Xaverian charism and spirituality. Accordingly, complacency could result in a decline in the lived experience of Xaverian spirituality, until the unique spiritual characteristics exist in name only. This charism is what allows the schools to share a unique mission and identity, and the loss of this identity would significantly and negatively impact each school’s call to Christian service.

The impending decline of Xaverian spirituality and charism, however, can be rectified. Indeed, the solution is two-fold. First, Xaverian spirituality should be more deeply explored and actively developed so it that can be more clearly described and understood. Second, Xaverian spirituality should be conveyed and
transmitted in myriad ways. Considering the existing body of programming, I propose a unique opportunity that empowers alumni from each of the thirteen schools to function as transformational leaders within schools. The model described in this project will give alumni the opportunity to serve as volunteers during a year of service, introducing them to both the differences and the shared Xaverian experience across all thirteen schools. In the process, this model will also strengthen the role of the alumni by allowing them to embody the lived expression of the Xaverian charism.

This model is different from existing programs because, while it is grounded in Xaverian spirituality and seeks to develop and deepen that understanding for the participants, it is conveyed through intentional, lived experience shared in community. The model invites interested alumni from all thirteen schools who have recently completed their undergraduate studies to live in community and serve at a XBSS school. Moreover, their assigned location will match their talents and gifts of the participants with the needs of each school. Their presence in the community will help deepen the lived understanding of the Xaverian charism, function as a tangible reminder of the importance of the Xaverian charism in the life of the school, and help continue to expand the shared understanding of the characteristics of Xaverian spirituality. At the same time, since the participants will live in community, their lived experience under the oversight of a program director will help to tease out the unique spiritual components that belong to the Xaverian Brothers within the constellation of faith within the Catholic Tradition. The XBSS
Office is encouraged to continue to look for and develop opportunities to convey and deepen the understanding of Xaverian spirituality, and this proposed program offers such an opportunity.

Xaverian history and spirituality are fundamental to the identity of Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools. To appreciate that identity, every spirituality and movement requires context and stewardship while at the same time being prepared for adaptation. This understanding of spirituality is still being investigated and deepened, as the *Xaverian Charism Project (Working Papers)* from Reginald Cruz, C.F.X. indicate. While Cruz is working on a more academic approach to understanding and describing the charism and Xaverian spirituality, each individual XBSS school already lives that charism and spirituality in unique ways based upon their own contextual circumstances. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest that the lived experience of the Xaverian charism and spirituality in a school like St. Xavier High School, in Louisville, Kentucky, is different than that of Xaverian Brothers High School, in Westwood, Massachusetts, despite their shared foundational charism. Founded in 1864, the former is the oldest school in the United States, while the latter was founded in 1963. These schools live the shared charism through a much different lens due to geographical, cultural, and historical factors. Nonetheless, it can be argued that the underlying unique understanding of

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2 The 26th General Chapter of the Xaverian Brothers in 2007 endorsed a directive on mission, and commissioned a five-year study of the Xaverian charism. These working papers contain significant research from Reginald Cruz, C.F.X. that focuses on describing and enhancing the understanding of the lived charism of the Xaverian brothers.
relationship with God, self, and others is shared universally across all thirteen XBSS schools.

Opportunity for Transformation

The term charism has a special connotation within the religious life of the Roman Catholic Church. Paul VI’s *Evangelica testificatio* created a specific focus on the “charism” of the founders of religious orders as people who were raised by God for that purpose. Unfortunately, as Futrell has argued, a charism “cannot be defined…it can only be described.” Writing about the Xaverian charism, Cruz has also maintained that “a charism cannot – and should not – be reduced to one phrase or sentence or even a paragraph…to condense the articulation of a charism into ‘bullet points’ is not only wrong; it perverts its deeper meaning.” However, in order to advance our knowledge and understanding of the distinctive character of Xaverian education and spirituality, I will advance the idea that Xaverian charism can be distinguished from others based on certain traits. First and foremost is that Ryken founded the Xaverian Brothers with St. Francis Xavier as its patron so that “the name of this insatiable laborer for souls will indicate with one word what is

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intended for the congregation.”6 This vision positions the Xaverian Brothers as a missionary order that evangelizes through education. The ministry of education starts with the understanding expressed in the Fundamental Principles that each person is a “unique expression of God’s love.”7 From this point of departure, some clear components of this charism are a focus on the transformational nature of the “ordinary” in the Middle Dutch mystic tradition; a strong sense of individual freedom as it interplays with prayer and discernment; as well as the formation of enduring personal relationships and the community dynamic that naturally follows.

Each of these components contribute to a greater understanding of the Martha/Mary dynamic. Jesus’ admonition that Mary had “chosen the better part” while Martha was fulfilling a crucial role in serving, creates a dynamic tension between the apostolic desire to work and serve, on the one hand, and the need for prayer and adoration of God, on the other (Luke 10: 38-42, NRSV). Xaverian spirituality calls for a contemplative stance while functioning in active ministry. While there are some similarities to Jesuit spirituality, particularly regarding a contemplative-in-action stance, the aforementioned traits and their origin in the Dutch tradition create a unique spiritual lens. It is through this lens that the charism

6 I am taking the Fundamental Principles from a self-published document from Xaverian Brothers High School. All references regarding the Fundamental Principles for the rest of this thesis come from this document: “The Fundamental Principles of the Brothers of Saint Francis Xavier: Adapted for Use in Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools” in In Harmony Small Things Grow (Westwood, MA: Xaverian Brothers High School, 2014), xv.

7 Ibid., xi.
can be understood, and the way in which it affects the interpretation of the movements of the Holy Spirit and the manifestation of gifts.

Because the charism is a dynamic constellation of components, each of the thirteen schools approach and live the Xaverian charism in different ways, with each school emphasizing or interpreting these components with greater or lesser degrees of intensity. Interaction between the schools is important to identify, develop, and integrate those perspectives into a cohesive whole that can further inform life lived at the individual schools. The significance of this claim has already been identified by the XBSS Office, and programs such as the XBSS Retreat for students and faculty already create gatherings of students and faculty from each school to interact and learn more about their shared charism. Already this interplay has helped create an aggregate understanding of the charism that can be used in the day-to-day life of the Office of Sponsorship to inform and guide their programming. The implicit hope of these retreats is that this experience is brought back to the individual schools and is integrated into the day-to-day life and culture of the school.

What follows is an endeavor that will explore the existing work on Xaverian spirituality, and use those sources to solidify, develop, and explain what makes the charism valuable and unique, and how it naturally lends itself to Transformative Leadership. The completion of this project thesis is merely the start of this process, and it is hoped that this will add to and move forward the existing conversation regarding charism and mission. In addition, to make this conversation bear more
than theoretical fruit, I present a year-long service program that each of the 13 schools could subsequently adopt, wherein recent college graduates could volunteer for a year of service at one of the thirteen schools, with their placement within the school focused on their particular gifts and talents. These volunteers would ideally live in community, and their spiritual formation would be centered on the Xaverian charism, how it was experienced in their own Xaverian school, and how it is manifested within their current school and community. Built into this formation plan will be a practical implementation of transformative leadership techniques to develop participants into transformative leaders within their school, and for their future professions.

This transformational opportunity will allow for transmission of different lived perspectives of Xaverian spirituality across the schools, providing diversity and opportunities for dialogue, while at the same time producing individuals who enact transformational leadership within their own school communities and subsequently in their own lives. Because the participants will be working for a year within their assigned schools, their lives will be witness to and sharing of their experience of the charism at their prior school. The design of the program will ensure that they will be daily reminders of the shared identity, a daily supporter of shared mission, and a daily challenge to the status quo. They will be transformational leaders, while also imparting those leadership skills to their students and colleagues.
Chapter 2

Xaverian Brothers Charism and Spirituality Contextual Analysis

The study of religious orders in general is a broad, richly populated field because of the long history and tradition of religious orders in the Catholic Church. As a result, studies range from historical treatments, such as chronologies of the orders or biographies/autobiographies of the founders, to specific focus on a particular role of an order (the reformation of the Church by the Franciscans, the intellectualism to preach and combat heresy during the middle ages by the Dominicans, or the Jesuit leading edge of the Counter-Reformation are three common examples). In each of these historical approaches, each order’s unique charism can be inferred, but is not necessarily expressly stated. Religious orders are also discussed as an overall totality, looking at the roles of the general vows present for each order: poverty, chastity, and obedience.

The Second Vatican Council created a significant shift in the importance of understanding each religious orders’ fundamental spirituality. The exhortation for religious orders to reflect upon and reevaluate their spiritualities in light of the modern world, by “scrutinizing the signs of the times and ...interpreting them in light of the Gospel,” has caused each order to consider how true they are to their founder’s charism.\(^8\) There is scholarship by individuals outside of the

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organizations, but more commonly these articulations of charism come from members of their respective communities. Often, these documents are not presented for external viewing, but are published internally.

An important instance is the scholarly work of Reginald Cruz, C.F.X. on the Xaverian Charism Project, which was presented to the limited audience of “Brothers, Xaverian Associates and Collaborators.” While these documents are inherently colored by Cruz’s bias and his approach to the charism, it is an invaluable resource to get to the heart of what Cruz and his collaborators feel articulates the order’s spirituality. When used in conjunction with existing historical analysis, the historical facts can provide a helpful corrective lens to understand the charism in light of the historical context and intent of the founder (to the extent that these historical treatments are not hagiographic).

In the case of the Xaverian Brothers, very little scholarship exists. Cruz’s work on the Xaverian Charism Project is the most modern work on the Xaverian Brothers, but it is a treatment of their lived spirituality, not their history. For historical analysis, only three texts exist, and the first two published, *Men and Deeds* and

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March On! God Will Provide are somewhat hagiographic. That being acknowledged, there is much that can be inferred about the perceived spirituality of the Xaverian Brothers by the authors, according to what aspects they chose to emphasize or minimize. Rooted in History focuses on Theodore Ryken’s life, takes on a more scholarly, objective tone, and contains the founder’s three foundational documents: “The Report,” “The Plan,” and “The Scheme.” These documents allow significant insight into the founder’s intent, and by inference to the charism of the Xaverian Brothers. Finally, the preamble to the current version of the Constitutions of the Xaverian Brothers entitled the “Fundamental Principles of the Brothers of Saint Francis Xavier” has been adapted for use in the XBSS Schools and is illuminating. In the most practical way, the XBSS Office’s work, maintained by the Xaverian Brothers, is helpful to demonstrate the lived charism as manifested within their lived apostolic work, and that of the collaborative laypeople who teach alongside them (or in some cases, without them in the school at all).

A complete, contextual treatment of Xaverian spirituality is untenable for the scope of this thesis, given that the Xaverian Charism Project’s Working Papers of the Xaverian Brothers spans 100 pages itself. Instead, I will focus on the components that make this charism unique and valuable. I suggest that the

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11 These two books are published under the vowed names of the authors and not their birth names. Consequently, they do not have last names listed. They are listed in notes and bibliography by their vowed names in this thesis: Julien, Men and Deeds: The Xaverian Brothers In America, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1930); Aubert, March On! God Will Provide (Boston: E.L. Grimes Co., 1961).

12 Jan Devadder, Rooted in History: The Life and Times of Theodore Ryken Founder of the Xaverian Brothers, Volume 1 (Beernem, Belgium: De Windroos, 1986), 497-539.
founder’s conversion experience is at the heart of the spirituality of the Xaverian Brothers, and that is then most clearly transferred to, and conveyed through an emphasis on these themes: the “ordinary,” freedom, enduring relationships, and community.

Historical Context and Development of Charism

Theodore James Ryken founded the Xaverian Brothers, in Bruges, Belgium in 1839. The acceptance of this Catholic religious order by Pope Gregory XVI indicates that its charism is unique. Ryken’s journey to found the Xaverian Brothers is one of tenacity and persistence. The process illuminates a fundamental aspect of the spirituality which enlivens and guides the Xaverian Brothers, and by extension their schools.

Ryken was born in 1797 in Elshout, Holland, which at the time was firmly under the control of Dutch Calvinists due to the Treaty of Westphalia. Bro. Aubert notes that,

Ryken was Dutch, and the Dutch are a very serious people. Their century-old struggle against the sea has made them a determined people. The horrors of war, religious and secular, have made them a grim people. In religious matters they are either intensely Calvinist or intensely Catholic.\(^\text{13}\)

Bro. Aubert reveals much in this description. Ryken’s success is greatly attributed to his serious determination and deep faith. Following the death of his father in 1807, Ryken’s mother could not afford to raise all three of her children, so Ryken was sent along with his brother James to live with their guardian, whom they called

\(^{13}\) Aubert, *March On*, 6.
“uncle,” and Ryken took up the trade of shoemaking. He was given very little education, and Devadder, assuming his audience consists of Xaverian Brothers, notes that this is “a fact of which the consequences are still at present weighing heavily on the Congregation.”

Ryken’s lack of education may have had rippling ramifications in terms of the way in which the formation of the order and business matters would be carried out in the future. For instance, the financial difficulties that the order faced by the time of Ryken’s retirement could be attributed to his limited educational background. However, I would suggest that this lack of education also made him better able to recognize God’s role in his life at the time of his conversion experience. He did not have the kind of rationalization skills that allow the better educated to ignore the presence of the Divine, particularly when it is inconvenient.

Ryken’s conversion experience is at the heart of the Xaverian Brothers’ spirituality. Hence, it is important not only to the historical context, but also to the constructive application of the charism within the apostolic teaching ministry of the brothers. Ryken writes simply and enigmatically that, “I led a worldly life from my 14th or 15th year until about the age of 19 when, thanks to a deep humiliation, I was converted and fell in love with the service of God.”

His mention of a worldly life echoes St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Augustine. All of these conversions were borne out of a sense of pain, and required reevaluating life and experiences.

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14 Devadder, Rooted in History, Volume 1, 25.

15 Aubert, March On, 6; Devadder, Rooted in History, Volume 1, 38.
through the lens of Christ’s call. For Ignatius, recuperation from his cannonball injury would plant the seed of the Spiritual Exercises and his own vocation; for Augustine, it would be the revelation in Romans 13 that he needed to turn away from his “drunkenness…and sexual excess” (Romans 13:13-14, NRSV). Ryken’s conversion leads him to an appreciation of being connected to the “common.”

According to Cruz, Aubert’s passage about the ‘deep humiliation” has been mistranslated, leading to important historical ramifications. To begin with, there is the word “humiliation.” Taken at face value in this current translation, the word humiliation seems to speak of some kind of embarrassment, and one that the reader can only speculate about. I recall attending the XBSS Retreat during my junior year of high school and James Kelly, C.F.X. told us that there was much speculation regarding this humiliation. Was it a physical defect? An embarrassing sexual encounter? A relationship gone wrong?

Considering Ryken’s “worldly life” it could have been any of these. I share this story because as late as 1997 one of the Xaverian Brothers most knowledgeable about Ryken’s life felt that these were all reasonable possibilities. Cruz’s work argues that Ryken does not mean embarrassment at all, but rather that the Middle Dutch word he uses in this passage, diepe vernedering means “powerfully being put in my place.” As Cruz points out, the term, “does not necessarily entail the experience of humiliation.” As Cruz continues:
Rather, as Ryken experienced it, to be put in one’s place involves becoming powerfully aware – in a moment of blic [brief glimpse of God in their spirit, just like lightning in the heavens] – of the ordinary ground on which one stands.”

This changes the tone of Ryken’s account of his conversion, and is not the only mistranslation that Cruz identifies.

Cruz also takes issue with the phrasing of “I was converted and fell in love with the service of God.” Cruz highlights that the verb bekeerde does not mean conversion as such, and that the syntax that follows is also incorrect. So, rather than reading “I was converted and fell in love with the service of God,” it should be rendered, “I turned toward God, fell in love, and put myself in His service.” Once again, this results in a significant change in tone, and taken together with the mistranslation of diepe vernederung has a significant impact on the interpretation of the charism, as well as the way in which the founder intended to have the Xaverian spirituality interpreted.

The blic that put Ryken “in his place” is a moment of grace, not humiliation, though it is certainly possible that feelings of humiliation could come with that moment. From that experience, Ryken was grounded in the “ordinariness” of life, and through that grounding recognized his interconnectedness to God and others, as well as the way in which he had been and was being shaped by the ordinary. While this profound experience could have the emotional impact of a “great

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16 Cruz, Working Papers, 23.

17 Aubert, March On, 6; Devadder, Rooted in History, Volume 1, 38.

18 Cruz, Working Papers, 23.
humiliation,” it does not follow that it had the negative impact that humiliation connotes. Furthermore, in the new translation of the second half of this disputed passage, Ryken’s behavior is active, not passive. He does not simply experience a conversion, but rather reacts to his _vernedering_ by turning toward God first and foremost. While God’s grace is certainly abundant and the Holy Spirit is at play in this circumstance, Ryken utilizes his freedom to _turn toward God_. God does not simply convert individuals against their will. More significantly, when Ryken _turns toward God_, he then chooses to “fall in love” with God. Once again, to fall in love is an act of freedom and of the will, and while God’s love is present and ever available, it takes human action to reach out and develop that relationship.

It is only after that relationship is established that Ryken chooses to put himself “in God’s service.” In this way, the service to God, and indeed Ryken’s understanding of vocation, naturally flows from love of God and the relationship that is developed in and through that love. This changes the tone of the passage entirely, and helps to avoid a hint of Pelagian heresy that could be read into Ryken’s account of his conversion experience. Service, while clearly important, comes as a response to God’s love.

Already three of the major components that I have suggested are important to focus on are present: the “ordinary,” freedom, and enduring relationships. The “Fundamental Principles” continue to build on this theme: “If you allow yourself to be formed by God through the common, ordinary, unspectacular flow of everyday life, you will gradually experience a liberation and freedom never before
imagined."¹⁹ This passage echoes these thematic components of freedom of choice, the placement into and experience of the ordinary, and the relationship with God. It grounds the Xaverian charism in the recognition of the “ordinary” as fundamental to recognition of freedom and the response to God and others.

Significantly, it also is an excellent assessment of Ryken’s pursuit of his vocation and the eventual foundation of the Xaverian Brothers. Ryken’s understanding of vocation would be gradual, and would require Aubert’s “serious determination.” He would find frustration and difficulty teaching children catechism and that frustration would cause him to leave this pursuit (though he would return). With good intentions, he would attempt to serve the sick in Gronigen during what Aubert calls a typhoid epidemic and Devadder identifies as the Spanish Flu, only to become ill with the disease himself.²⁰ During this time, Ryken conceived of a “Brotherhood, a society of men, bound by the vows of religion and living in community, who would devote themselves to the spiritual welfare of young boys.”²¹

Ryken traveled to Rome to seek the approval of Pope Leo XII, and was rebuffed. He was to discover, as Aubert notes cheekily, “Rome does not baptize, it confirms.”²² Ryken joined the Trappists and took vows as Brother Nicholas in the Olenberg Monastery; however, he was subsequently forced to leave following the

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¹⁹ “Fundamental Principles,” xiii.
²⁰ Aubert, March On, 9, 11; Devadder, Rooted in History, Volume 1, 68.
²¹ Aubert, March On, 12.
²² Ibid., 12.
revolution of 1830. During this exile he would hear about the “noble savages” in the United States, and felt drawn to work with the Native Americans in evangelization. He would subsequently travel to Cincinnati, and then live with Fr. Michael Badin, and work with the Potawatomi Tribe.

After a cholera outbreak, Ryken traveled back to New York, where he made the acquaintance of Jesuit priest, Peter Jan De Smet. Fr. Peter would direct Ryken’s attention to the plight of immigrants, a constituency that Ryken would eventually decide to be the focus of his educational attention. Ryken continually attempted to follow his vocation. The repeated “failures,” or if one were to look at it differently, his repeated *vernedering* and his continual turning toward God, were reaffirmations of his love of God and his desire to place himself in God’s service.

Since the focus of this exploration is a contextual analysis of the spirituality of the Xaverian Brothers, I do not wish to belabor the historical details regarding the formation of the Xaverian Brothers. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the pattern of searching and *vernedering* was an overarching theme of Ryken’s life. Similarly, his need to continually turn toward God in those experiences (to love God and put himself in God’s service) was as recurrent. This is not to say that Ryken was passive throughout this experience. In 1838, while speaking with Jesuit provincial Fr. Peter van Lil, S.J. who was against the foundation of the order, he made a statement that not only summed up his frustration, but also offers yet

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23 Devadder, *Rooted in History*, Volume 1, 128.

24 Ibid., 150.
another glimpse into Ryken’s spirituality. On that occasion, he said, “God is not obliged to give an account to man for what He does.” Clearly Ryken felt he had discerned his vocation, particularly with the help of his spiritual advisor, Fr. Isidore Van de Kerckhove, S.J., and was not going to let a Jesuit provincial get in his way. The eventual formation of the Xaverian Brothers community also highlights the last major theme of the Xaverian Charism: community. Ryken envisioned his congregation as a “band of Brothers who mutually help, encourage, and edify one another, and who work together.”

The Xaverian Charism is supported by five spiritual values, and these values are found within the Charism as well: simplicity, humility, compassion, zeal and trust. These values are ordered so that their implementation flows from God, and their use strengthens relationship with God, self, and others. Simplicity “frees the heart, the mind and the soul for the work of evangelization and education” because it provides an antidote to the prevalent modern worldview that focuses on materialism and consumerism. It allows an individual to be more open to recognizing moments of vernedering, and then successfully respond to it by turning to God. Humility allows individuals to “accept and affirm their giftedness as well as

25 Aubert, March On, 45; Jan Devadder, CFX, Rooted in History, Volume 1, 320.


28 Ibid.
to acknowledge the giftedness of others," which is profoundly important not only to building community, but also to being able to respond by putting oneself in God’s service.  

It is not possible for people to effectively put themselves in God’s service if they are not aware of their own giftedness, as well as their own limitations. Compassion is at the root of a life lived in community, but also key to the development of deep, meaningful relationships. Compassion “calls for the openness necessary to let oneself be touched by another’s life and the courage to reach out in loving service to others,” which is at the heart of Ryken’s conversion experience. The blíc that prompted Ryken response to turn to God and fall in love with God is rooted in a recognition of God’s love. Compassion is an internalized response to that love that is outward seeking and that allows for that response.

Zeal is evidenced in the choice of St. Francis Xavier to be the patron saint of the Xaverian Brothers. More importantly, zeal is the source of Ryken’s “serious determination;” that despite all the setbacks he encountered, he continued to work toward his discerned vocation. It is zeal that inspired Ryken to judge “that nothing special is achieved without much labor, effort and zeal.” Furthermore, it is this value that encourages all members of the Xaverian Brothers community toward a

29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 “Fundamental Principles,” xi.
“single minded devotion to, ardent enthusiasm for and intense drive to fulfill the Church’s ministry of education.”\(^{32}\)

Trust in this context refers most specifically to trust in God, though certainly community cannot be built without trust. Ryken’s trust in God’s love and in his discernment of God’s will is what allowed the Brothers throughout history to “respond in faith and courage to the enormous difficulties [they] encountered.”\(^{33}\) These spiritual values are also fundamental to the four characteristics I have identified as crucial to the Xaverian charism. Namely, these are the “ordinary,” freedom, enduring relationships, and community.

**The “Ordinary”**

In looking at the “ordinary,” as is referred to in the “ordinary, unspectacular flow of everyday life,” the original Dutch mystic tradition of the ordinary has to be applied since Ryken grew up with and interpreted language within that context.\(^{34}\) It is a “subtle yet powerful…spiritual worldview that affected not only [Ryken], but the people of Noord-Brabant who had stubbornly remained faithful to their Catholic heritage in Protestant Netherlands.”\(^{35}\) The ordinary in this case translates roughly to “one-fold” and its use points toward being grounded as our most basic selves.\(^{36}\)

\(^{32}\) “Spiritual Values”

\(^{33}\) Ibid.

\(^{34}\) Ibid.

\(^{35}\) “Fundamental Principles,” xiii.

Put another way, “the ordinary is the ground where we were first located, where God had known us – and delighted in what we already were and had – before we came to know and define ourselves in another way.” The difficulty of returning to that original ground, of embracing humility, is caused by each person’s “sinful and graced humanity,” and yet it is absolutely crucial to developing a meaningful relationship with God, self, and others.

For Ryken, this initial return to the ordinary required his experience of _vernedering_. This is something Ryken would experience throughout life. While it is a state of being that is difficult to maintain, it is crucial for ministry and evangelization. It provides an antidote to the post-modern self-absorption, materialism, and consumerism because as Cruz asserts, “to be grounded in the ordinary is to be wary of a life of privilege and entitlement, to be guarded about the compulsion to seek the limelight or be the sole center of other’s attention.” The ordinary is also at the core of how an individual manages to live in community. In fact, the _Fundamental Principles_ repeatedly highlight this concept:

> You are called then by your Founder to enter into a true mutual sharing with your brothers and sisters. This sharing will demand of you an opening and a giving of yourself to them at many levels, and a ready acceptance of each of them in all their sinful and graced humanity… Listen to your brothers and sisters, be compassionate with them in their difficulties, bear with them in their weaknesses, encourage and support them. Affirm your brothers and sisters in their gifts, for by doing so you enable them to realize the gifts that God has given them for service. In turn, allow them to affirm you and call you forth to even greater service of God.

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37 Ibid., 19.

38 “Fundamental Principles,” xiv.

39 Cruz, _Working Papers_, 21.
Above all, enter into an ever deeper sharing of faith and prayer with your sisters and brothers; reflect with them on how you find God in your lived experience.\textsuperscript{40}

To deal with others in their own sinful and graced humanity, to bear with them in their difficulties and support them, one must be able to see them as they are. In order to hear the call, one must be capable and willing to hear that call. Ryken’s recognition of the common and “ordinary” led to his appreciation of its significance for this preparedness. As Ryken lived this understanding as part of his spiritual reality, he recognized how crucial centering oneself in the “ordinary” is to this ability to “see” and “hear.”

**Freedom**

The discussion of freedom may seem unnecessary, given that every assent to God’s call requires freedom. Even Mary had to assent to God and say, “May it be done to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38, NRSV). That freedom and assent is why she is so beloved by the Xaverian Brothers. *The Fundamental Principles* are replete of phrases that highlight the significance of freedom:

Friend, you have freely chosen to respond to the call of God...In calling you God too was completely free...God is not obliged to give an account to anybody, even if God wants to use a sinner...It is through you God desires [to offer people] the freedom of the children of God...You have responded to the invitation: Come follow me...you must be willing to spend time each day in solitude and prayer, opening yourself to God’s living word...Gradually you will realize that the cost of your discipleship is your very life, freely consecrated to God...If you allow yourself to be formed by God...Like Mary may you willingly respond...You are called then by your Founder to enter into a true mutual sharing with your brothers and sisters...In this life of following Christ, allow yourself, therefore, to be given away...Yet like Ryken foster an attitude of openness to the needs of the Church and your world, and a willingness to follow Christ wherever He leads. [emphasis added]\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{40} “Fundamental Principles,” xiv.

\textsuperscript{41} “Fundamental Principles,” xi-xvii.
At the root of this focus on freedom is Ryken’s own experience of *vernedering*, where he could have chosen to ignore or repress the experience, and not turn to God. Ryken recognizes that there is an intentionality to spirituality, and brings that emphasis to bear as he forms the Xaverian Brothers. Perhaps more importantly, Ryken also highlights God’s freedom as well, underscoring the reciprocal nature of God’s relationship. This concept of God’s freedom must have been particularly evident to Ryken in his early years, as he struggled with each endeavor ending in what he perceived to be failure. Perhaps most significant is God’s agency to use individuals according to His will, which may not be evident to human minds. Just as Ryken admonished Provincial Fr. van Lil, “God is not obliged to give an account to man for what He does,” he is also reputed to have said, “God is not obliged to give an account to anybody, even if God wants to use a sinner.”

**Enduring Relationships**

Ryken’s conversion resulted in the recognition of the reciprocal nature of a relationship with God, which is at the heart of the primacy of enduring relationships in the Xaverian Brothers spirituality. True relationship requires freedom, and “the

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43 “Fundamental Principles,” xi.
Xaverian Charism is, at its core, relational." The theme that human relationships are relationship with God, self, and others is a focus of campus ministry programs at Xaverian Brothers schools. Enduring relationships are at the heart of not only prayer, but also community. Ryken’s band of brothers cannot exist without enduring relationships, and the nature of educational ministry requires the teacher to develop relationships with their students.

**Community**

Xaverian Brothers’ spirituality is based on the presumption that life will be shared communally, and, in the case of the religious order, mediated by the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. More important than the vows, however, are the community itself and the relationships developed there. For Ryken the life of the ordinary brother must be oriented towards the community. Ryken saw the reorientation of a future brother toward the life in common as indispensable for nurturing the unique spirituality of his brotherhood, not simply because of the exigencies of the mission which the Spirit entrusted to the congregation, but also as the Spirit’s means to elevate the ordinary beyond the mediocre.

What is particularly important here is the clear distinction between ordinary and mediocre, and that the role of community is to elevate the ordinary beyond the mediocre. There is an important implication here that the ordinary actually transcends the mediocre, and that the place where “God had known us” is

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46 Ibid., 26.
actually better than the mediocrity achieved by giving into the sinful temptations of
the world. Rather than pointing toward others as the cause of this temptation and
subsequent mediocrity, Ryken sees community as corrective to an individual's
inability to recognize the ordinary in their own lives and remain grounded in it.

Although the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools are now primarily
populated and administered by laypeople, the importance of community remains
at the heart of the charism. Moreover, the same important distinctions apply. Even
though they may not be living together in community as vowed religious, the
members of each school community are called to provide the same support and
help elevate the ordinary beyond the mediocre.
Chapter 3

Literature Review

In order for any dialogue to have a strong foundation, the theoretical and academic exploration of Xaverian charism and spirituality must first be rooted in an understanding for and appreciation of Catholic spirituality. With that as the underlying theme, it will then be possible to explore and appreciate the existing knowledge and descriptions of Xaverian spirituality and charism. After both subjects are explored, the overarching theme of mission must be considered to discuss how to develop, maintain, and advance both the Catholic and Xaverian themes discussed. Mission also provides a transitional point of departure from the theoretical and academic nature of the discussion of spirituality, and points to praxis and the creation of a program to enhance the existing programs offered through the XBSS Office. This proposed program will incorporate the aforementioned three topics, but also must focus on practical concerns about the successful implementation of such a program. Therefore, a discussion of pastoral theology is necessary to ensure a thoughtful and practical design, particularly for the residential portion of the program. In tandem with the discussion of pastoral theology is a consideration of Sabbath practices that can be intentionally created within the program to provide the participants time for prayer, reflection, and renewal.
Catholic Spirituality

The Xaverian Brothers are a 177-year-old order of consecrated laymen within the Catholic Church, so in order to appreciate the unique spirituality they possess it must first be put in context of the almost two-thousand years of spiritual development in the Catholic Church. Rather than attempt to discuss the wide range of Catholic spiritual practices and realities in this setting, the focus will be upon the components that help develop and elucidate both an understanding of the Xaverian Brothers in their current context, as well as provide a foundation for the residential service program. Throughout this discussion, David Perrin’s seminal work *Studying Christian Spirituality* will be used as a touchstone for analysis and discussion.

**Magisterial Documents**

David Perrin notes that one of the primary methods in discussing spirituality is a Theological approach and that within this theological approach are two paths: Doctrinal or Interdisciplinary.\(^47\) Because the Catholic faith places a strong emphasis on both revelation and tradition, an analysis of the documents issued by the *Magisterium* is an attempt to systematize and explain Catholic spirituality under the aegis of tradition, and is a definitively doctrinal approach.

The Second Vatican Council was a significant turning point in the life of the Catholic Church that, fifty years later, is still being interpreted and integrated into

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the practices of both the Church itself, and the lives of those individuals who identify as Catholic. It sought to scrutinize “the signs of the times and [interpret] them in light of the Gospel,” and reminds the faithful of the Church that at the root of human dignity is a “call to communion with God,” and, through that communion, to “discern [their] proper destiny beneath the eyes of God” because the “spiritual and immortal soul…is…the proper truth of the matter.”

Gaudium et spes emphasizes the balance between the inertia of the tradition of the Catholic Church and its relevance within a rapidly changing world, and also points to the individual uniqueness of each person and his/her spiritual communion with God, which leads to discernment. It empowers each person to commune with God both in the sacrament of the Eucharist and life of the church, but also through personal discernment. These concepts of human dignity and personal discernment are important to be conveyed on a personal level because they speak to all aspects of vocation and avocation, and encourage a deepening of relationship with each person and the triune God. This relationship is at the heart of Perrin’s admonition that self-knowledge must continually be evaluated and tested regarding the interior and exterior realities of lived experience.

Each religious order has been founded with an indelible mark simply through the vision of their founder. Pope Paul VI was mindful of this in the

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48 Gaudium et spes, sec. 4, 14, 19.

promulgation of his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelica testificatio*. Inspired by the work of the Second Vatican Council, it encouraged religious orders to “reawaken [their] hearts to truth and to divine love in accordance with the charisms of [their] founders who were raised up by God within His Church,” and, by doing so, to be “faithful to the spirit of their founders.”

This implicitly means that each order (and their apostolates) are also subsequently called to communion with God and discernment. As a result, there is importance for personal, spiritual discernment, but there is also a significant importance to institutional spiritual communion and discernment. Much like the Church, the institutions need to be aware of how the “signs of the times” impact their genuine expression of the charism of the order. This echoes the sentiments of *Perfectae Caritatis* that began the call to renewal of religious life during the Second Vatican Council.

Pope Francis’ first Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii gaudium*, focuses on another key component to the life of individuals and institutions of the Church. He locates missionality with the joy of the Gospel at its core. Considering institutions like religious orders, they are reminded that “the Church which ‘goes forth’ is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice.”

As a result, missionality within the Church

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50 *Evangelica testificatio*, sec. 11.

51 *Perfectae caritatis*, sec. 2.

is at the heart of its nature, because the natural response to the joy of the Gospel is to go forth and share it, bringing Christ’s light and love to all each person encounters. This is particularly relevant to apostolic missionary religious orders, because their apostolates are a direct manifestation of this “going forth.”

**Catholic Spirituality in Education**

There are many Catholic religious orders that educate. However, two that stand out due to their numbers are the Lasallian Brothers (F.S.C.) and the Society of Jesus (S.J.). The fact that there are religious orders that have an educational apostolate indicates that there is something inherent in the spiritual identity of Catholicism that connects not only to catechesis, but also to education in general. Indeed, *Gravissimum Educationis* proclaims the “inalienable right to an education,” and emphasizes that “schools have a special importance.”53 This is, therefore, a missionary and ultimately spiritual obligation for those who minister within this educational environment. Knowing that Xaverian spirituality and charism will be tied to education, it is helpful to discuss how other religious orders also approach the spirituality of education, and the similarities that they share. This will naturally point to other aspects of Catholic spirituality.

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The Lasallian Brothers

As has already been noted from the Second Vatican Council’s renewal, there has been much change in committing to the founder of each religious order’s vision. Indeed, as it has been observed by the Christian Brothers, the “original context within which [the charism of the Lasallian Brothers] arose is vastly different than that of today.”\textsuperscript{54} At the same time, according to De La Salle, the heart of the educational ministry is the conviction that “their work as educators …is the work of God…to collaborate in the history of salvation in Faith and Zeal.”\textsuperscript{55} This assertion is certainly borne out in their mission statement: “Lasallian schools are Catholic educational communities inspired by the vision of St. John Baptist de La Salle, providing a human and Christian education to the young, especially the poor, in solidarity with the living tradition of the Brothers of Christian Schools.”\textsuperscript{56} Their mission naturally flows from the “Ten Commitments of Lasallian Schools,” which highlight the centrality of Catholic spirituality and mission to the process of education.\textsuperscript{57}


\textsuperscript{56} Van Grieken, \textit{Touching the Hearts of Students}, 191.

\textsuperscript{57} See Appendix I: Ten Commitments of Lasallian Schools.
The shift in vocations also requires an awareness of the differences between the lives of vowed religious and laypeople, and their respective lived spiritual realities. There is emphasis among the Lasallians on the collaborative work of those Brothers who have committed to a consecrated life with those who are non-consecrated laypeople, living a vocational life as single or married. Much like the Xaverian Brothers, the Lasallians recognize the importance of their mission while also correctly noting that it requires the non-consecrated to understand and participate in the mission. When Van Grieken wrote in 2008, he referred to an internal analysis from 2001. Of the 82,930 individuals teaching in their institutions, only 3% (6,325) were Brothers. This highlights that this missionary ministry has a unique charism based on the religious institution, but that it requires the non-consecrated laypeople to embody and understand that charism. Furthermore, it points to the same potential future the Xaverian Brothers have encountered, where non-consecrated laypeople could eventually be responsible for maintaining the charism and spirituality of the order at some of the educational institutions.

The Society of Jesus

The apostolate of the Society of Jesus is not limited to education; however, a significant part of the ministry of the Jesuits is devoted to educational endeavors. Since at the heart of these concerns is the foundational concept of Jesuit charism, it is equally important to identify the ways in which Jesuit spirituality helps to

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58 Van Grieken, Touching the Hearts of Students, 13.
elucidate Catholic spirituality. These ways are described in the *Characteristics of a Jesuit Education*.\(^{59}\)

Close examination of these Jesuit characteristics reveals many similarities with the Lasallian schools, although they are expressed in their congregational documents with different terms or aspects of Catholic spirituality. This is, of course, to be expected since each have different congregational charisms. While Lasallian characteristics demonstrate a focus on the movement of the Holy Spirit, the Jesuit characteristics connect to the Jesuit mainstays of creating “men and women for others” and viewing education as an “apostolic instrument.”\(^{60}\) What is important to focus on is the consistency demonstrated, either explicitly or implicitly, such as the centrality of God and the care for the dignity of the person, while also focusing on education as an opportunity to evangelize and provide formation for the students.

In his essay, “The Just Development of the Mind and Heart,” Michael Maher, S.J. notes that “Jesuits have always been conscious of integrating their fundamental mission within specific cultural contexts.”\(^{61}\) This intentionality is a recognition of the unique charism and identity of the Jesuits, and the need to inculcate not only education, but also development of a spiritual identity. This

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\(^{59}\) See Appendix II: Characteristics of a Jesuit Education.

\(^{60}\) See Appendix I (Lasallian) and Appendix II (Jesuit) for further clarification and comparisons.

intentionality is reflected in the Jesuit response to increasing secularity in religious institutions in the later part of the 20th century. Recognizing an increased secularity in society, as well as an increase in lay-faculty, the Jesuits created a strategic planning process to articulate their unique, shared institutional identity.62 This pivot toward an intentionality of identity and integration of charism mirrors that of the Xaverian Brothers and the Lasallians.

An important component of the Jesuit charism and formation within Jesuit spirituality is the experience of the Spiritual Exercises. Joseph Tetlow, S.J. notes that this results in five kinds of conversions: moral, religious, sociopolitical, affective and intellectual.63 These conversions lead to development of personal relationships with Jesus (God), others in community, and a personal awareness of oneself. This experience is fundamental to Jesuit identity, and while those that attend a Jesuit institution may not necessarily experience the Spiritual Exercises themselves, their educational experience within the institution finds its foundation on these conversions, and the subsequent development of relationships.

Development of the individual are unable to occur in a vaccum, because as Perrin notes, “characteristics of self are understood only in relationship to the world


outside the self – for example in relationship to other persons, nature, and God.\textsuperscript{64}
Theodore Ryken chose the Jesuit St. Francis Xavier to be the patron saint of the Xaverian Brothers, and was influenced by Jesuit formation. It should come as no surprise, therefore that this focus on relationship is fundamental to the Xaverian understandings of God and education.

Xaverian Spirituality

Xaverian charism and spirituality is a field in its infancy. Aubert and Devadder focused on simply following the history of the founder and the order, while Julien chronicled the history and foundation of the American schools from 1864-1930.\textsuperscript{65} Given that these are historical presentations, they focused primarily on the life and times of the individuals involved, and not the nature or formation and development of the charism. In addition to the lack of discussion on charism, the material unfortunately excludes a significant number of the existing schools that were founded subsequent to its publication.\textsuperscript{66} While these texts do not provide an explicit approach to Xaverian spirituality, what they do indicate is what the authors value. Since all three authors were Xaverian Brothers, the valued historical stories point to an underlying spiritual reality, and also provide historical context.

\textsuperscript{64} Perrin, \textit{Studying Christian Spirituality}, 132.

\textsuperscript{65} Aubert, \textit{March On}; Devadder, \textit{Rooted in History}, Volume 1; Julien, \textit{Men and Deeds}.

\textsuperscript{66} Of the thirteen existing XBSS Schools, only four were built before 1930 (St. Xavier in 1864, Mount Saint Joseph in 1876, Saint John’s School in 1894, and Saint John’s Preparatory School in 1907). The other schools were built between 1932 and 1989.
This is firmly in line with Perrin’s historical approach to spirituality, which argues that historical context provides an understanding of circumstances surrounding the development of practices, as well as a deeper appreciation for existing practices and traditions due to an understanding of their origins. For instance, one of the important themes to explore will be Ryken’s conversion and the meaning of his “deep humiliation” which heralded that experience, in particular because it shows up in both biographies as a focal moment. This development will lead to Reginald Cruz’s modern work of interpretation based on the Middle Dutch writings of Ryken.

The Historians

Aubert, Devadder, and Julien all attempt to tell the story of Ryken and the Xaverian Brothers, and work with translations from letters and notes of Ryken, as well as the oral and written history of the Xaverian Brothers. Aubert’s biography is brief, and to some extent hagiographic. Devadder, on the other hand, meticulously and honestly, through primary sources discusses the history of the Xaverian Brothers from the birth of Ryken to his death. The conclusion of his second volume is quite telling as it implores the reader that

No matter how great his deficiencies, fault and errors may have been, the faith dimension of his life should not be ignored. It was faith – and loyalty to it, down to the juridical obligations of his religious profession – that made him true to his

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69 Cruz, *Working Papers*. 
Xaverian vocation in the darkest hours... It was faith that induced him over and over again to seek forgiveness from God and his fellow-men and to implore their sympathy with the ‘poor sinner’ he confessed to be.\textsuperscript{70}

Ryken’s utterance to a bishop as he worked towards founding the order, “God is not obliged to give an account to man for what He does,”\textsuperscript{71} takes on new light in the Fundamental Principles. There we can read, “God is not obliged to give an account to anybody, even if God wants to use a sinner.”\textsuperscript{72} The combination of these statements points to a spirituality that places faith in the providence and guidance of God, while at the same time recognizing “the graced and sinful nature of humanity.”\textsuperscript{73}

\textit{XBSS Office Synthesis}

The XBSS Office was formed by the Xaverian Brothers Generalate to help maintain and develop the Xaverian Brothers charism at the thirteen schools, as well as to oversee each of the schools. Through their work in conjunction with the Generalate, they articulated the \textit{Xaverian Brothers Vision, Spiritual Values, and Calls and Goals}.\textsuperscript{74} These documents were approved in 2000 and implemented in the 2000-2001 school year, and provide a synthesis of lived experience and

\textsuperscript{70} Jan Devadder, CFX, \textit{Rooted in History}, Volume 2 (Brugge, Belgium: Xaverianenstraat 3, 1987), 554.

\textsuperscript{71} Jan Devadder, CFX, \textit{Rooted in History}, Volume 1, 318.

\textsuperscript{72} Xaverian Brothers High School, “Fundamental Principles,” xi.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., xiv.

\textsuperscript{74} See Appendix III: Xaverian Brothers Vision, Spiritual Values, Calls and Goals.
historical understanding of the Xaverian charism, both in practice, but also as expectations for the thirteen existing schools. A more dynamic source is the *Living the Charism* website that provides an opportunity for Xaverian Brothers and lay collaborators to reflect on their own lived experience of the Xaverian charism in video and written format.\(^75\) The vision section highlights foundational components of Xaverian spirituality, particularly as lived within the schools\(^76\). With this section in mind, the focus here is to provide a succinct assessment of the Xaverian charism and spirituality. A close discussion of the vision section will provide a solid foundation for our discussion.

**Enduring Personal Relationships**

“God is love,” and in order to exist, love requires relationship (1 John 4:8, NRSV). This insight highlights that the heart of the triune nature of God’s oneness is the relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is further dynamically expressed through the understanding of community as each person’s relationship with God, self, and others. These relationships are also rooted in love, and flow from God, because our ability to love at all is from God: “We love because [God] first loved us” (1 John 4:19, NRSV). Since “the Xaverian Charism is, at its core, relational,” it places at the heart of its identity the nature of love and formation of

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\(^76\) “Vision.”
loving, enduring relationships. This love is at the heart of recognizing human
dignity, and in particular approaching all members of the community with
compassion and understanding.

James Kelly, C.F.X. was one of the modern giants in Xaverian education.
During his time as principal and headmaster he wrote weekly letters to parents that
focused on the day-to-day experience of the school. All his letters are undergirded
with aspects of the Xaverian charism. One of his brief stories highlights the way
in which this relational nature is imbued into the day-to-day life of the school day.
He speaks of a boy named Sean who actively rebelled against the school dress
code, and therefore seemed to disrespect the values of the school community:

There, sitting on a bench, was Joe, a senior who was having incredible emotional
problems, and next to him my friend, Sean. When I called Brother Crane aside and
asked him what was going on, he replied that Sean, recognizing Joe was having
incredible problems, came out every day after eating his lunch to sit with Joe. They
apparently didn’t talk, but Sean gave Joe his quiet support. Bells, of course, went
in my head, and I thought to myself, ‘Kelly, you idiot!’ I had made a quick judgement
on Sean because of his appearance but here was a boy who, while he might fight
us on the dress code, had obviously learned the most important
lessons of a
Catholic education in a Xaverian Brothers’ school. Here was a boy who was
looking out for a very troubled classmate and who continued to look out for the
troubled classmate even when that classmate did not respond.

Kelly’s anecdotal story highlights the centrality of enduring personal relationships
and the role of love in the life of a Xaverian school.

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77 “Spiritual Values.”

78 These letters were subsequently collected into two volumes: James Kelley, C.F.X.,
Respecting the Man the Boy Will Become (Louisville: Butler Books, 1999), and James Kelly,
C.F.X., Building Men Who Matter: On the Marvel and Mystery of Raising Teenage Boys
(Louisville: Butler Books, 2010)

79 Kelly, Building Men Who Matter, 79.
Stewardship for God’s Creation

The call to stewardship of God’s creation begins in Genesis (Gen 1:28, NRSV), but is echoed and affirmed as recently as Francis’ encyclical letter, Laudato si. The Xaverian approach is an extension of the focus on relationships, noting that care should be given for “the human person and personal relationships, the earth’s environment and its natural resources, or the material resources entrusted to their use.” This serves as a reminder that Xaverian spirituality must center itself in a temporal and physical reality, with the recognition of its place within and participation in all of physical creation. The Xaverian charism is, therefore, not a heady spirituality of intellectualism floating in the ether, but rather a real and practical reality manifested in the “common, ordinary, unspectacular flow of everyday life.” The Xaverian charism echoes the Jesuit ideal of finding God in all things. The parallel should not come as a surprise since in “The Plan,” Ryken himself encouraged the Brothers to “accept a rule, which will be brought in accordance as much and as far as possible with that of the Jesuits.”

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81 “Vision.”
82 “Fundamental Principles,” xiii.
83 Devadder, Rooted in History, Volume 1, 512.
Centrality of Religious Instruction, Spiritual Formation, Worship, and Prayer

The Vision document groups religious instruction, spiritual formation, worship and prayer as central to the Xaverian vision and charism. This is certainly true, but exploring such a significant set of topics as one subject would be confusing and less fruitful. They are therefore presented in terms of the educational construct, as well as the active praxis that flows from that theological education, although they have been grouped together by the XBSS Office.

Centrality of Religious Instruction

Ryken recognized the importance and significance of not only education, but also specifically religious education. He created a missionary order of consecrated laymen intended to have “knowledge which goes together with the zeal, … [to teach] the first principles of the Christian religion and that, besides this, … have the ability to educate children in the ways of virtue.”84 The Second Vatican Council affirmed the necessity of and right to this kind of education in Gravissimum Educationis, almost a hundred years following Ryken’s death.85 Education naturally flows from the establishment of meaningful relationships and is a response to the desire to help each person achieve the potential granted by each person’s God-given gifts and talents. This centrality cannot be understated since the primary and central ministry of the Xaverian Brothers, unlike the broad

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84 Ibid., 513.
85 Ryken died in 1871, while Gravissimum educationis was promulgated in 1965.
apostolic outreach of the Jesuits, is education. The curriculum of Xaverian schools requires religious education and aims to create and sustain personal and enduring relationships.

**Centrality of Prayer, Spiritual Formation, and Worship**

Theology and religious education, which can be relegated to the merely cerebral, need to be integrated into the lived experience of each person. Because of this necessity, it is the expectation of the XBSS office that all network schools give “priority to providing the time and space necessary for reflection, prayer, sharing of faith and sacramental celebrations as integral dimensions of the educational program.”\(^{86}\) While purely academic instruction can be focused on facts and knowledge, it is not innately holistic with regard to the education of the person. Once again, the constellation of relationship to God, self, and other is demonstrated in this approach.

Relationship to God is expressed in the centrality of prayer, which is a profoundly personal and individual experience of God’s presence, even when being performed in a group setting. Through prayer, each individual spends time developing a relationship with God, and perhaps deepening a relationship with one particular aspect of the Trinity. This practice of prayer influences all other relationships, which should come as no surprise since these three relationships

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are interconnected and interdependent. The foundation of discernment, both as understanding God’s will and responding to God’s call, is based in prayer.

Relationship to self is expressed in personal spiritual formation, which is profoundly personally transformational, even though it naturally needs the insight and guidance of others. Spiritual formation is experienced formally in spiritual direction, faith sharing, and service experiences with subsequent debriefings. Informally, an individual experiences spiritual formation as the underlying purpose of the Xaverian community, particularly through relationships and how they help an individual incorporate God into one’s life. Thus, while spiritual formation requires others to enable the process to occur, the impact and focus is significantly self-directed, allowing the individual to recognize their own giftedness and meaning. Spiritual direction requires members of the community to

listen to [their] brothers and sisters, be compassionate with them in their difficulties, bear with them in their weaknesses, encourage and support them. Affirm [their] brothers and sisters in their gifts, for by doing so you enable them to realize the gifts that God has given them for service.87

The focus of spiritual formation is for the individual. However, it is also reciprocal because it then allows the other members of the community to recognize the obligation to “allow them to affirm you and call you forth to even greater service of God.”88

87 “Fundamental Principles,” xiv.

88 Ibid., xiv.
Relationship with others culminates in the various acts of worship that are experienced in the life of each school. While all acts of worship place God at the center, it is at the center of a community participating together in worship as one body. This community-centered approach allows all people in the community to find that their “love and friendship within the community be one of the chief joys with which God blesses [them] and a powerful means of evangelization.”\textsuperscript{89} Of particular importance to the expression of the Xaverian charism is the Founder’s Day liturgy celebrated in each of the thirteen schools, as well as the various events that surround the liturgical celebration. The Founder’s Day celebration is centered around the week surrounding Ryken’s death (November 26) and the feast of the patron saint, Saint Francis Xavier (December 3). Through these observances, the community is reminded of their shared charism and spirituality, and allows for a deepening in the lived reality of that experience.

\textit{A Challenging Educational Program}

While Christian education was at the heart of what Ryken envisioned as the focus of his missionary order, he also hoped that the Brothers would be able to teach so that the students “learn how to work for their own livelihood [and] by doing so … also hope them to lead a regular life, to assure the salvation of their souls and to render their conversion more stable.”\textsuperscript{90} Ryken initially focused on the

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., xv.

\textsuperscript{90} Devadder, \textit{Rooted in History}, Volume 1, 514.
education of Native American children. However, his recognition of the need among immigrant populations lead to the foundation of the first school in Louisville, Kentucky. This direction has evolved into the need for “programs that encourage active lifelong learning.”

The integration of active, lifelong learning into the life of the community and the student experience needs to be flexible enough to adapt to the context of each of the thirteen schools, while being faithful to the vision of Ryken. In order to reach this educational goal, the Xaverian approach cultivates programs that emphasize and allow for student and teacher interactions that promote the creation of enduring relationships, and that recognize the uniqueness of each student, grounded in that student’s dignity, and the various gifts each student has. This means that each school is empowered to seek the curriculum and methodology that addresses the unique needs of its community, with a focus on Ryken’s original goals. Ultimately, each school may appear to be a different expression of this ideal, but it is rooted in the tradition and charism of the Xaverian Brothers and Ryken’s fundamental desire.

A Spirit for Harmony

The motto of the Xaverian Brothers is *Concordia Res Parvae Crescunt*—“In harmony small things grow.” At first glance, it could seem that this spirit is

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92 “Mission.”
merely outwardly focused, in the hope that a properly harmonious community can result in the collective positive growth of the individuals within the community. While this sense is perfectly valid, it also extends to the other two relationships: proper harmony in prayer and communion with God results in a better sense of discernment and vocation; harmony within oneself results in a greater sense of humility and also greater appreciation of individual giftedness. All of these senses of harmony instill humility and "[offset] the effects of unhealthy attitudes that can impede human relationships and paralyze the functioning of the school community." Ryken’s life had great moments of instability; nevertheless, his central vocation was in profound harmony with his identity and permitted him to pursue his goals with a focus and dedication that could easily be mistaken for a sense of stubbornness. Ultimately, his dedication was fundamentally rooted in a sense of harmony and oneness with God’s call and vocation.

A Passion for Justice and Peace

Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium encourages all people to deepen their relationship with Christ while responding to the Good News of the Gospel. At the heart of the Gospel is the message of peace and justice, something that Francis focuses on in his commentary on “The Social Dimension of Evangelization.” The response to this call toward peace and justice is,

93 “Calls, Goals.”

94 Evangelii gaudium.

95 Ibid., sec.176-258.
therefore, at the heart of the Xaverian charism, and ultimately expressed in and by the thirteen schools. This is expressed in a clear, active way in the life of service-to-others within and outside the school communities. The XBSS Office also highlights that discipline and governance at all levels should reflect and encourage justice.\textsuperscript{96} This focus on justice also impacts school finances so that enrollment includes “the poor and the marginalized, thus enabling real cultural, social and economic diversity to exist.”\textsuperscript{97}

\textit{The Working Papers}

The \textit{Working Papers on Xaverian Spirituality, Life Form, Ecclesiality and Mission (Working Papers)} are part of the Xaverian Charism Project initiative. These documents were commissioned during the 26\textsuperscript{th} General Chapter of the Xaverian Brothers in 2007. They show the significant influence of the scholarship of Reginald Cruz, C.F.X., and were initially intended to provide a “theological and contextual background for [the] study of [the Xaverian] charism.”\textsuperscript{98} In this context, they provide significant insight into the nature of Xaverian charism and spirituality, as well as the missional nature of the congregation, and by extension the Xaverian schools. These aspects will be explored in depth throughout the remainder of this

\textsuperscript{96} “Mission.”

\textsuperscript{97} “Calls, Goals.”

\textsuperscript{98} Cruz, \textit{Working Papers}, 3.
discussion; however, it is important to note that the existence of these papers indicates that the Xaverian Brothers have already recognized the concern central to the thesis of this dissertation, and have begun to create resources to better describe their unique charism and spirituality.

Mission

The XBSS Office and each Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School has a mission statement. The similarity and overlap among them points to and affirms a mission that is at the heart of the Xaverian educational experience.99 Dana Robert highlights that any attempt at proper mission requires others to “reach beyond their own comfort zones and insecurities” and these mission statements point specifically to that intent.”100 The Xaverian educational experience is, therefore, rooted in the charism and spirituality of the Xaverian Brothers, and also demonstrates lived missionality instead of simply a stated mission.

Dana Robert and Andrew Kirk provide a helpful backdrop and language to analyze the existing Xaverian mission statements and mission as described in the working papers.101 This analysis provides a starting point to discuss the ways in which the proposed residential volunteer program can fit into the existing mission,

99 See Appendix IV: Xaverian Mission Statements.


and how its own mission should be crafted. Mission is essential to the success of the proposed program and the apostolic work the volunteers will encounter. Alan Roxburgh and M. Scott Boren’s sense of missionality then provides a helpful point of departure for proposing the missionality of this proposed program.\textsuperscript{102}

\textbf{Existing Mission}

The legacy of the Xaverian Brothers, Theodore James Ryken, and Saint Francis Xavier create the foundational missional context for understanding the mission of the sponsored schools. This is significant because mission is rooted first in identity formation.\textsuperscript{103} All of the mission statements from the sponsored schools acknowledge their sponsorship by the Xaverian Brothers, and many will name some aspect of Ryken or Xavier’s influence. Three of the schools bear Xavier in their name; therefore, their identity is a testament to both the Xaverian Brothers and Xavier’s missional character. The connection to Ryken and the legacy of the Xaverian Brothers is so important that, despite Roberts’ assertion that “most missionaries’ lives are not celebrated with official saints’ days, place names, communion services, pilgrimages and parades, and stained glass windows,” the schools celebrate just that in ways implicit and explicit.\textsuperscript{104} All schools

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\item \textsuperscript{102} Alan Roxburgh and M. Scott Boren, \textit{Introducing the Missional Church} (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2009).
\item \textsuperscript{103} Robert, \textit{Christian Mission}, 152.
\item \textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 171. Schools have everything from specialized stained glass windows, to statues and iconography. Many schools use naming conventions for various divisions or room assignments that invoke Ryken and Xavier.
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celebrate a Founder’s Week, beginning with the date of the founder’s death and culminating with a Mass near the date of the Feast of Saint Francis Xavier. Identity is the foundation of Xaverian Brothers mission.

With an eye toward identity, the Xaverian Brothers were founded in Bruges, Belgium, and then later came to the United States, but they are also missioned globally. This is much in line with the missionary association of St. Francis Xavier, and the ad gentes missionality of the 19th century Catholic Church. While recognizing the international nature of the Xaverian Brothers, the scope of this discussion focuses on the shared mission of the United States Sponsored Schools. If successful, however, this approach could also be adapted for international use. With a focus on the United States, this overarching mission analysis encompasses the XBSS Office and the existing thirteen sponsored schools. Together they provide a starting point for mission analysis because “Ryken firmly believed that the best way to bring out the giftedness in an individual was through education.”\textsuperscript{105}

Education, therefore, is a significant tool of mission and evangelization ministry that is at the heart of the missionary zeal of the Xaverian Brothers.

One of the defining characteristics of the Xaverian charism is the formation of enduring relationships. This is clearly stated in the XBSS Office mission statement, and shows up in various forms in the mission statements in ten of the

\textsuperscript{105} Cruz, Working Papers, 88.
thirteen schools. I have earlier suggested that love is at the root of all relationships, and therefore a significant foundation for Xaverian mission starts with love and an openness to the call of the missio Dei. An openness to that call "presupposes that we are speaking about a personal God with particular characteristics." Kirk suggests that the driving force of the missio Dei is love. Since God is love, "God is in himself mission through and through…no one falls outside its compass." This love is outward seeking, and leads naturally to service in and outside of the community. Once again, service is mentioned explicitly in the mission statements of ten of the thirteen schools.

Seeking outward is indicative of the missio Dei, but Cruz also highlights that mission also entails an ad intra direction. One does not necessarily need to travel to far-distant lands to find men, women and children living in this Late Modern society for whom Christ is unknown and this is quite true. One must merely look to the internal composition of each school to recognize that the evangelical mission of preaching the Good News can also be turned inward to the members of the

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106 See Appendix IV: Xaverian Mission Statements. LC, MC, SBS, SJS, SJP, XBHS, XHS all refer to community. OLGC notes community and emphasizes love, STX and MSJ note community and specifies enduring personal relationships.


108 Ibid., 29.

109 See Appendix IV: Xaverian Mission Statements. LC, OLGC, SBS, STX, XBHS and XHS all refer to service, while MSJ and SJP mention service and highlight justice and peace. SJS focuses on providing opportunities to the marginalized and the poor.

community. It is for this reason that all thirteen schools point to their identity as Catholic in their mission statement. Furthermore, twelve of the thirteen schools specifically name spiritual development or education as an integral part of their mission, particularly in light of the gospel message.\footnote{See Appendix IV: Xaverian Mission Statements. SMR’s limited mission statement proudly claims it’s Catholic and Xaverian identity, but does not specify the ways in which this impacts their mission.}

While it is certainly important to acknowledge that there are many additional aspects of mission that can be discussed and explored, the scope of this discussion is limited. So, moving forward, there is a focus on five parts of mission that have been identified: identity, education, enduring relationships, service, and internal evangelization. Each of these is an integral part of the understanding of missio Dei, and can inform the creation of a transformational program.

**A Model That Validates and Integrates Existing Mission**

Based on the commonality among the mission statements, the overarching mission provided by the XBSS Office is integrated in the XBSS Schools. Therefore, a transformational leadership program that would seek to deepen an understanding of Xaverian spirituality and charism must first integrate the existing mission into its own structure. I suggest that the five commonalities listed provide a strong foundation. To build on this foundation, there are some missional considerations.


**Identity**

The recognition of the ways in which Xaverian spirituality and charism has shaped the community is necessary to provide a strong foundation and secure environment for missionality. However, this understanding of foundation cannot be considered to be static. Identity is rooted in memory, and memory, particularly in scriptural terms, “is what the skeleton is to the body – without it, all collapses into an insubstantial mess.”\(^{112}\) When Roxburgh and Boren refuse to give a definition of missionality, they turn to the analogy of a river, flowing with and powered by mystery, memory, and mission.\(^{113}\) Thus identity is linked to a kind of fluid non-static memory that is in opposition to typical Western understanding. They claim that “the memory of God’s choosing and acting is never confined to the past; it lives in the present and shapes the future.”\(^{114}\) When identity and memory are seen as a process and a guide, it allows for flexibility with each encounter. It also encourages prayer and discernment. Cruz is open to this when he notes that Brothers who continually attempt to integrate prayer and contemplation with growth in friendship within the community and are on fire with the Spirit-driven apostolic zeal would be powerful, mission-oriented witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Cruz notes that “the integration of these elements [are] essential.”\(^{115}\) Any proposed program

\(^{112}\) Robxburgh and Boren, *Introducing the Missional Church*, 43.

\(^{113}\) Ibid., 39.

\(^{114}\) Ibid., 43.

\(^{115}\) Cruz, *Working Papers*, 87.
must, therefore, ensure that its participants are well aware of their identity and history, and have a strong sense of institutional memory. In a seemingly contradictory way, the more confident an individual is with this fluid and God-infused reality of memory, the more open this individual is able to maintain and grow existing identity into what God is calling it to be in mission.

**Education**

Because the identity and mission of the Xaverian Brothers is so firmly grounded in the educational ministry, any program seeking to enhance mission must also maintain this important component. Participants must serve to educate and spread the Gospel message to other members of the community they serve, while at the same time remain attentive to God’s call and open to education. The primacy of education is present in the many references to Jesus’ titles of *rabbi* and teacher.\(^{116}\) And so, if “following in the way of Jesus Christ (discipleship) is test of missionary faithfulness,” then the role of education cannot be ignored, and in fact should be acknowledged and embraced.\(^{117}\)

**Enduring Personal Relationships**

Roxburgh and Boren claim that one of the greatest impediments to missionality is a default post-modern preference toward individuality, stating that

\(^{116}\) John 1:38; 3:26; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8, Mark 9:5; 11:21, Matt 26:25, Mark 10:51; 14:45 etc.

\(^{117}\) Kirk, *What is Mission*, 39; emphasis by the author.
we are shaped by a version of the gospel that focuses on individuals. There is an unstated, pervasive assumption that God’s salvation is for individuals, and if individuals will heed the message, they will have a better life. It can be a shattering experience to realize that while God came to save persons, God’s grace does not revolve around me and my needs. It is God’s story, and we are participants in this story and mission.¹¹⁸

The greatest antidote to the individualism that the Western secular world has created in contrast to the Church is the experience of community. As enduring relationships are developed, there is a greater concern for the other, and as that becomes a consistent way of viewing the world, for others. Each of the three kinds of relationships support and develop one another. As deeper relationships are made with others, a clearer understanding of God and self are revealed. Deepening a relationship with God clarifies the significance of relationships with others, and of God’s gifts of grace and talents to the self. A deeper understanding of self results in an acceptance of our sinful and graced humanity, and this acceptance leads ever closer to God and creates an openness and acceptance of others. Enduring personal relationships, rooted in love, are the driving force behind mission, because God, who is Love, is the driving force behind mission.

Service

Service to others is a natural response to God’s love, and a recognition of the humanity of the others in the world, particularly those outside of the community. In terms of mission, “the reality, causes and resolution of poverty are inseparable from the call for relationships of justice between individuals, communities and

¹¹⁸ Robxburgh and Boren, Introducing the Missional Church, 70.
Therefore, any program would be significantly deficient in Catholic mission without a clear and defined service component. Since the proposed program consists of a year of service, then this expectation is met. The important piece of that experience will be ensuring that each participant spends time reflecting on the ways in which the experience of work is service, as well as exploring ways of serving others.

**Internal Evangelization**

Since the *ad intra* concept of mission has become a more common viewpoint, focusing the lens inward points toward a need for evangelization even within Catholic institutions. In this way evangelization and mission are intertwined, because “mission is the basic – if not the most urgent – task of the Church, for to profess faith in Christ is to become part of His life and vision of the world.”120 On a fundamental level, to participate in mission is to invite others to share in faith in Christ, and to also become part of His life and vision of the world. Any program would need to place individuals in the community not only to serve, but also to evangelize. In this context, to evangelize is not to proselytize, but rather to mirror the words attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi: Preach the Gospel at all times; when necessary use words. Participants in this program accomplish *missio Christi,* and

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120 Cruz, *Working Papers,* 73.
“manifest Love to the peoples of the world in these times, and…offer them the freedom of the children of God.”

Pastoral Theology

In order to adequately plan and execute a spiritual formation program for the volunteers of the proposed program, as well as effectively incorporate the Xaverian charism more deeply into the life of each school, an application of pastoral theology is helpful. The understanding of charism as the root of ministry is a helpful way to demonstrate the interconnectivity of the historical and described charism and the lived experience. Cahalan suggests that all ministry is rooted in a three-fold charism of being, knowing, and doing.\(^\text{122}\) When this is applied to the Xaverian charism and spirituality, it allows a concept such as enduring personal relationships to be appreciated not only as a fundamental charismatic concept, but also as a construct of this three-fold process.

First is the charism of being, which refers to the self and the ability that each individual has. In the context of enduring personal relationships, an understanding of personal disposition leads to a deeper understanding of the gifts, talents, and weaknesses that may encourage or impede a person to form enduring personal relationships. Perhaps an individual is introverted and finds it difficult forming meaningful relationships in hectic or busy settings. Knowing the introverted nature

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\(^{121}\) “Fundamental Principles,” xiii.

of this personality the volunteer them to tailor their ministry to find settings that help the formation of relationships. In another case, perhaps an individual is aware of demonstrating a gruff manner in the classroom, but also engages with students compassionately as a coach. This juxtaposition requires attention to the opportunities on the field, while simultaneously working on developing skills to combat the classroom weakness of gruffness. This kind of self-knowledge is certainly enhanced by the threefold understanding of relationships. At the same time, these charisms are innately outward seeking, focusing on ministry and building the Kingdom of God.

The second charism that Cahalan proposes is a charism of knowledge, which asks the question “which kinds of knowledge…are important to learn about discipleship and ministry…to lead the community in its mission”?\(^{123}\) It is important to note that while this is asking a self-centered question of what the individual needs, again its focus is on serving the community as a disciple and minister. In the case of developing enduring relationships, there are academic areas that have value. Focusing on practice and relational dynamic theory, discussed in psychology and models of ministry, may be useful academic subjects to study. The charism of knowing does not replace the charism of being, but rather builds upon the existing gifts and supplements existing limitations.

\(^{123}\) Ibid., 70.
In all cases, both of these charisms are not made manifest in ministry without the charism of doing. In this regard, both the charism of being and charism of knowing are full of potential. The charism of doing is the execution of the prior two with the action of ministry. However, the impact that any ministry has is tied directly to all three. Doing focuses on competencies and action in executing the demands of ministry. This skillset draws from personal gifts and talents, as well as individual knowledge. The first time a minister has to help someone cope with loss, that minister may have to struggle with personal issues of being that limit the ability to connect. Alternatively, the minister may have knowledge and personal strengths, but may execute poorly the kind of pastoral care necessary at the time because technique and approach (doing) are flawed.

This practical approach to ministry is a helpful reflection and development tool, particularly for volunteers seeking to serve in ministry, especially in the broad context of a Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School. Cahalan presents six practices of ministry: teaching, preaching, care, prayer and worship, social mercy and justice, and leadership and administration. Potentially, a volunteer could experience all six in a given day given the diverse experiences within a school day.\textsuperscript{124} A focus on their charisms can help develop not only their missionary effectiveness, but also resilience and flexibility for future encounters.

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 70-97.
Cahalan’s voice is important, and her three-charism lens is an excellent foundation for encountering and implementing ministry. I will expand those three categories through other voices, particularly Griffith’s concept of embodied knowing, Tracy’s correlational model, Tilley’s approach to tradition, Copeland’s understanding of memory, and Hinze’s practice of dialogue in regard to ecclesiology. Each of these voices speak in different ways of being, knowing, and doing, and highlight their interconnectedness.

**Being**

Understanding the charism of being is difficult, because even the act of understanding, which is innately rooted in being is an act of doing. As a result, each act has a feedback loop that impacts an understanding of the self, and transforms the self. All acts are borne of the self, and acts are as genuine as the correlation to truth of the individual. As Gerard Manley Hopkins would explain it: “Í say móre; the just man justices; / Kéeps gráce: thát keeps all his goings graces.” As volunteers are chosen for a service program, understanding their personalities

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and natures is not just important for placement and harmony, but also significantly important to understanding their fitness for ministry. Any kind of ministry is itself a spiritual practice, and “spiritual practices can serve as powerful bodily iterations of deep commitments and hopes of persons and communities.”\textsuperscript{127} For this reason, and in recognition of the feedback mechanism at work, the charism of being has to be nurtured and developed.

Ryken’s spiritual direction was largely Jesuit, and so his practice of the \textit{examen} shaped his understanding of himself and his vocation. In the same way that spiritual exercises are essential to understanding the self and developing awareness of relationship to God, Tracy claims this charism of being “corresponds to the ancient insistence on the role of practical exercises for personal and communal living.”\textsuperscript{128} This highlights the importance of designing the program with intentionality.

The act of describing and defining Xaverian spirituality and charism leads to a desire to conserve and maintain patterns of behavior and identity that are non-negotiable to the expression of that charism. This sense of conservation must be held in careful balance with an openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit. While aspects may seem non-negotiable, even the word non-negotiable is dangerous because as Tilley suggests, “behaviors may change over time. One behaves

\textsuperscript{127} Griffith, “Practice as Embodied Knowing,” 64.
\textsuperscript{128} Tracy, "A Correlational Model," 81.
differently as one approaches the Eucharistic table today from the ways one approached the altar rail a century ago.”\textsuperscript{129} The creation of this program generates an external agent that brings new voices from other iterations of the experience of Xaverian charism and spirituality into dialogue with a particular corporate and institutional experience. For that reason, I would argue that the charism of being has as much to do with the individual as it does with the corporate nature of the institution. It also means that the feedback of knowing and doing that changes the individual person has the potential to impart institutional growth and change. If that is true, then the participants in the program have to learn not only to dialogue with each other, but also with the community in which they volunteer. Thus, any implemented programming must keep in mind that “three sets of dialogical skills are central to dialogical practices: those pertaining to speaking, listening, and advancing a conversation that promotes collective discernment, decisions, and action.”\textsuperscript{130} The design of the program has to develop these important skills on both the community and institutional levels.

\textbf{Knowing}

It is tempting to relegate knowledge to simply an academic sense of theories and rules. It makes it deceptively alluring to state that once an individual knows enough information and has memorized enough facts, that the individual becomes

\textsuperscript{129} Tilley, “Practicing the Faith,” 93.

\textsuperscript{130} Hinze “Practices of Dialogue,” 245.
qualified to do certain things. And while it is true that basic knowledge is necessary to be effective in ministry, Griffith offers the reminder that “excellence in leading others in prayer is not the same thing as having knowledge of schools and traditions of prayer; nor is it simply the product of this.”

Therefore, there is another kind of knowledge that is revealed in the practice of ministry. A sense of embodied knowledge and innate skill that can be assigned to the charism of being. It is a type of knowledge, but does not appear to be a factual kind of knowledge, and demonstrates itself as a sense of embodied knowledge which appears in the act of doing. As Griffith formulates it, “participants engaged in practice always ‘know’ more than they can say about what they are doing. The ‘knowing how’ of practice spills wider than any ‘knowing that’.” And so, the practice of ministry demonstrates a kind of knowledge that cannot be evaluated in the binary fashion of right/wrong, but rather needs to be treated holistically.

Institutional knowledge and memory also demonstrate this kind of knowledge. It is certainly true that the institution has a history and sense of institutional knowledge. The way in which that memory is lived out is an important indicator of the way in which the Xaverian charism is known and its spirituality is displayed. Copeland touches upon how the act of institutional practice is vital to knowledge and memory: “In the articulation, depiction, performance and handing

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131 Griffith, “Practice as Embodied Knowing,” 58.

132 Ibid., 57.
on (traditio) of those meanings and value, memory performs a vital task: it opens access to a past, makes a future possible, and renders the present functional.”\textsuperscript{133}

As a result, knowledge displayed in the “doing” of a Founder’s Week celebration or graduation creates in the present moment a link to the past and grounds the moment on the memory and charism. The knowledge within the act ripples outward and into the future, with the past demonstrating not only the hope for, but the definitiveness for a future that exists.

\textit{Doing}

While the act of doing is demonstrative of both being and knowing, it is also a route toward enhancement of being and knowing. Just as previously mentioned, the act of doing demonstrates knowledge. At the same time, it also generates knowledge and increases awareness of being and identity. Put another way by Griffith, “Practice was never understood to be solely the result of theological or doctrinal insight. It was seen as something that itself gave rise to insight and to heightened consciousness.”\textsuperscript{134} There should be patience, therefore, with the process the volunteers experience as they work in their various ministerial functions. Just the act of participating is transformative, and results in awareness of self and greater knowledge. The careful balance that should be maintained, 

\textsuperscript{133} Copeland, “Weaving Memory,” 135.

\textsuperscript{134} Griffith, “Practice as Embodied Knowing,” 54.
however, is that the increase in awareness of self and knowledge is intentional and requires effort. This reflection should be mandated in program design.

Any institution, particularly educational institutions, require rules, regulations, and expectations to function smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Some rules are required, such as expectations for academic integrity or dress code. Other rules, such as the way in which a community celebrates a liturgy or forms relationships cannot be purely regulatory. There has to be explanation and understanding so that the act becomes suffused with meaning. As Tilley points out: “Whether crossing the street or making the Sign of the Cross, participating in a practice is not and cannot be a ‘blind’ and ‘repetitive’ following of rules.”\textsuperscript{135} That means that the Xaverian charism and spirituality cannot be a dead, legislative set of statements, rules and expectations, but rather that it must be lived and experienced.

Sabbath Practices

In a world driven by communication and technology, it becomes ever easier to neglect the proper time for liturgy, prayer, reflection, and conversation. Successful integration of Sabbath practices into the proposed formation program is essential to ensure the inculcation of the transformational leadership practices and the Xaverian charism into the lives of the participants. Since these participants

\textsuperscript{135} Tilley, “Practicing the Faith,” 97.
will be working within the context of a school day, their day-to-day experience is apt to not only vary, but also incorporate a tremendous variety of experiences, from teaching and coaching, to developing relationships, to the administrative minutiae of grading and meetings. While Stone and Wolfteich focused on urban pastoral excellence, the hectic and varied pace of an urban pastor is a helpful point of departure for how to structure a volunteer program in this context.\textsuperscript{136}

Stone and Wolfteich highlight identity as a challenge in the context of the urban pastoral environment. Nonetheless, in the case of the proposed volunteer program, the sense of identity is actually a strength.\textsuperscript{137} While some participants may have an experience of disorientation because practices and rituals vary from their high school experience at their XBSS school, fundamentally the identity and legacy of the Xaverian Brothers remains the same. Because of the shared sense of purpose and shared identity, the participant will be more comfortable and able to engage in Sabbath practices. One of the ways that Stone and Wolfteich suggest this can be most effectively approached is by creating and “cultivating holy friendships.”\textsuperscript{138}


\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 14.

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 26.
The mention of holy friendships parallels the important Xaverian charism aspect of developing enduring personal relationships. In that way, the Xaverian tradition has already anticipated this enlivening and refreshing way to not only experience God and the Sabbath, but also to provide support. There is value in these relationships, because although real Christian friendship is “risky and challenging,” it is also transformative for ourselves and those friends. In the Xaverian tradition, change does not occur in a vacuum, but rather requires relationships. It was by design that Ryken sought to create a communal order; he did not seek out a hermitage. It requires these relationships to recognize God’s presence more readily.

With regard to Sabbath practices, Stone and Wolfteich suggest that the practices of rest, creativity and worship are a helpful starting point for creating space for renewal. In and through these practices, there are opportunities for spiritual renewal with a cultivation of silence, an intentionality of prayer, time for reading and reflection, as well as maintaining a sense of humor and self-care. It should come as no surprise that these concepts are included in and expounded upon in Dawn’s four-part dynamic of ceasing-resting-embracing-feasting. In

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139 Ibid., 29.

140 Ibid., 42-52.

141 Ibid., 63-75.

Dawn’s context, rest begins with ceasing. It carries an intentionality and discipline that makes the act of ceasing a spiritual exercise and practice. Rest is also delineated into spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual. What Stone and Wolfeich call creativity, I suggest can be applied to Dawn’s dynamic of embracing, which doesn’t point to a creative outlet, but rather an openness to recognize God and all God’s will to re-create the self. This re-creation of self naturally leads to a desire to respond in a way that Stone and Wolfeich call worship, and Dawn describes as feasting. While worship indicates an outward act toward God, and feasting appears to be centered on the self, both are a way of recognizing God’s presence in the world; and impel a response by immersion in God’s presence in all things.

One of the important aspects of Dawn’s work is her emphasis on the ways in which Sabbath practice helps to develop Christian community.\textsuperscript{143} Since the proposed program requires participants to live in community, the Sabbath practices don’t only allow for a personal renewal, but also a communal growth and development of enduring relationships. Wirzba and his practice of “Sabbath Education” support the necessity of these practices.\textsuperscript{144} Sabbath practices need to be intentionally implemented and integrated into the proposed program to assist in

\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., 111-118.

\textsuperscript{144} Norman Wirzba, \textit{Living the Sabbath} (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 129-141.
developing and enhancing the community, while also being available for individual growth and renewal.

Xaverian charism and spirituality, as well as the proposed program, are counter-cultural. In an increasingly secular, post-modern world, religious institutions are now a statement against the status quo. They are a visible protest against the tenants of society that undermine the dignity of humankind and profane the holy. As Heschel muses, “is our civilization a way to disaster?” At first glance the answer could very well be yes.\textsuperscript{145} Brueggemann suggests that Sabbath practices are themselves a form of protest and a resistance against the insidious nature of this cultural reality. As culture has become increasingly dependent upon technology, the pacing of the day has increased and bled into times traditionally reserved for rest. This is caused by a focus on the transfer of commodities as a benchmark of success, which has made its way even into the academic value of a grade. Life becomes transactional instead of invested with meaning. The solution to this is to recognize that God turns this vision on its head with a “divine commitment to relationship (covenant) rather than commodity...[and] the capacity and willingness of this God to rest.”\textsuperscript{146} He suggests that Sabbath practices are a resistance to anxiety, coercion, exclusivism, and multitasking.\textsuperscript{147} Integration of

\textsuperscript{145} Abraham Joshua Heschel, \textit{The Sabbath} (New York: Farrar, Starus and Giroux, 2005), 27.


\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 20.
Sabbath practices, then, is not just a way to provide rest, build community, and deepen a relationship with God, but also a way to actively and intentionally resist this materialistic, post-modern secular culture.

For all of the aforementioned reasons, Sabbath practices are particularly necessary in the context of the proposed programming. The program design will be intentional and mindful of Sabbath practices as forming structure and community while also serving as a resistance to secular culture. Sabbath practices also speak to the root of Christian tradition and its Jewish forbearers. In this way, just as this program seeks to celebrate and connect to the deeper institutional memory of Xaverian charism and spirituality, the Sabbath practices provide a connection of memory and tradition to salvation history.
Chapter 4

Proposed Service and Spiritual Formation Program

Based on the historical, theological, and organizational analysis provided in the previous chapters, I have come to the conclusion that there is both the need and the opportunity to create a program that will deepen and expand the existing understanding of Xaverian spirituality and charism. First, I will discuss Ryken’s plan for the purpose of the schools and share some anecdotal ways that programming already exists to nurture Xaverian spirituality and charism. This will provide a contextual background and appreciation for the ways in which this proposed program could enhance and complement existing practices. Second, I will then describe the structure and concept of this service and spiritual formation program.

When Ryken founded the Brothers of St. Francis Xavier, he chose St. Francis Xavier as the patron saint intentionally, so that “the name of this insatiable laborer for souls will indicate with one word what is intended for the congregation.”  

This identification with Xavier is evident in Ryken’s document “The Scheme.” Here he directed the congregation toward service and education:

children of the male sex, and among those especially to orphans and the deaf and dumb…so that these children will be given back to the church, the religious state or society as perfect Christians; by the same token Christianity will be sanctified and improved through them.


149 Devadder, Rooted in History, Volume 1, 534.
Since the founding in 1864 of their first American school, St. Xavier High School in Louisville, Kentucky, the Xaverian Brothers have overseen many high schools. Currently there are thirteen schools sponsored by the Xaverian Brothers, and eight of those thirteen still serve young men, with the other five serving coed populations. Nonetheless, the underlying goal of a strong academic foundation backed by evangelization of the Gospel is at the heart of a Xaverian Brothers education.

It is tempting to oversimplify the life of a school by looking only at the interactions of students and teachers, but that does a disservice to fully appreciating the complexity of the institution. Each of the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools have many major constituencies that require ministry and experience of the Xaverian charism: students, parents, faculty/staff/administration and alumni. Each of the thirteen schools offers their own, individualized approach to the question of how best to do this, but on some level each of these constituencies is engaged.

Xaverian Brothers High School as an Example

As an anecdotal attempt to highlight the significance of these constituencies, I'll share how Xaverian Brothers High School creates programming that conveys the charism in various spiritual practices. Despite their differences, all incorporate Xaverian spirituality into their design and implementation. Space does not permit an exhaustive presentation of the full host of programming available at Xaverian Brothers High School, let alone all thirteen schools, so
presented here is one program for each constituency, and an explanation of how Xaverian spirituality and charism is developed. Particular attention will be paid to the foundational concepts of the ordinary, freedom, creation of enduring relationships, and development of community.

**Students: SpiritHawk**

SpiritHawk is a student-led faith-sharing group created by the Director of Campus Ministry in 2000, following the success of a bible study group created in 1997. The program focuses on meditation, prayer, faith sharing, and development of relationships, particularly in the framework of relationship with God, self, and others. Leaders are selected by the campus ministry team, and given extensive training and spiritual formation, both on an overnight leaders' retreat each summer, and throughout the school year. In addition to weekly meetings, leaders are also assigned a campus minister who serves as a mentor and guide. The success of this program at Xaverian Brothers High School has led five other XBSS schools to adopt this program and adapt it to their community.\(^{150}\)

All the activities the students participate in are quite ordinary: teamwork and planning, shared meals, shared prayer, and group discussion. The emphasis in each step is to place meaning upon these common activities and encourage participants to see Christ's presence in every action, and to note that it is through these common experiences that God is constantly present and available.

\(^{150}\) MC, LC, SJS, and Xavier all have similar programming.
Student leaders freely choose to enter into their roles as leaders, and also work together to choose the week’s topic during their leader’s meetings. All participants are free to attend, and free to choose in which what small group they will participate. There is nothing compulsory about this activity, and yet a significant percentage of the school attends. This encourages leaders and participants alike to recognize their faith and prayer lives are freely given from God, and encourages ownership of their relationship with Christ.

Genuine relationships are developed among participants through formation and the experience of sharing meals and time together in small groups. Moreover, the development of stronger relationships leads to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. Because the program emphasizes trust, and the topics are meaningful, these relationships develop over time a deep and enduring quality.

Students who participate take an active role within the community, and actively contribute to the development of community. Students who do not attend nonetheless see community being developed. The experience of witnessing a living community is an encouragement to develop community within their own sphere of interest and influence.

**Parents: Rosary Group**

The formation of this program came at the prompting of a staff member who is particularly passionate about praying the rosary, and felt that there were not enough opportunities for parents to feel part of the community. Parents are encouraged to be an active part of the school community, particularly in volunteer
roles, but their engagement typically focuses on the maintenance and function of practical, day-to-day dynamics within the community. While this participation is necessary for the successful function of the school, it does not expressly address the development of the spiritual life, nor does it develop a sense of community and connection. Recently there has also been the development of a student rosary program that invites students from local Catholic girls’ schools to attend. This is directly related to the success of the parent program. This parent program is currently only offered at Xaverian Brothers High School, although its success indicates that it could also be successful at other XBSS schools.

Parents gather once a week to pray the rosary in the school chapel, and spend time in conversation. There are no special receptions; the parents attend without any fanfare and depart just as quietly. Their devotion requires a simple set of rosary beads.

Motivated by personal interest, the staff member freely chose to organize and design this program. The administration was supportive of her interest and she took advantage of this opportunity. Her decision was based on her response to prayer and the prompting of the Holy Spirit, and the proposal and implementation were freely chosen in response to this. At the same time, the administration allowed her the freedom to create the program. Finally, with regard to the parents, there is nothing compulsory about attendance, and yet participation is robust.
Because so many parents have chosen to attend the weekly prayer meeting, they have become acquainted with one another and have continued to develop relationships outside of the prayer group. A natural outgrowth of this activity is that the sons of the parents who have developed meaningful relationships are also developing relationships as well, often bridging gaps between grades and social groups.

Parental participation bears witness to the rosary, as well as reflects the Brothers’ devotion to Mary. In turn, students recognize the significance of this prayer group and choose to participate in other prayer opportunities that are offered. This activity also offers a gateway to parent-son communication, which helps knit families closer and builds community in that regard.

**Faculty/Staff/Administration: New Teacher Formation**

Teachers participate in a five-year formation program, prior to being eligible to apply for tenure. This formation program requires roundtable meetings and discussion, administrative and peer classroom observation, and active participation in campus ministry, athletic, and extracurricular activities around the school. All schools offer some type of teacher formation, while this piece focuses on the particulars of the programming at Xaverian Brothers High School.

All of the conversation and program participation are part of the common, ordinary, unspectacular flow of the daily life of the school. Participation and subsequent conversation encourages the new faculty, through reflection during their monthly roundtable discussion, to see Christ in the day-to-day flow of school.
While this program is compulsory for all new teachers, and the tenure application is contingent on successful completion of this program, the faculty members are free to choose how they wish to engage the peer observation, campus ministry and extracurricular activities in which they participate.

Through their participation in the roundtable program, faculty get to know one another better and develop relationships on a peer level. Through their participation in campus ministry, athletic, and extracurricular activities, teachers are given an opportunity to engage the students outside of the classroom and develop meaningful relationships that transcend basic classroom interaction.

Through their roundtable meetings, new faculty are introduced to the spirituality of the Xaverian Brothers, and encouraged to become active participants in the life of the community. They are shown how central the community is to the charism of the Xaverian Brothers, and shown how their participation in campus ministry, athletic, and extracurricular activities helps deepen their own experience, while also building up the life of the school.

**Alumni: Alumni Reunion and Outreach**

*Alumni* are always an important constituency, but they also have left the day-to-day community in a real sense. As former students, they have concerns about academic pursuits, careers, and vocational concerns that do not align themselves easily with a high school environment. While this disconnect is a natural part of moving on from their high school experience, many *alumni* remain in touch with each other and with faculty, staff, and administration. The focus on
the creation of enduring relationships during their time in school creates an environment that encourages the maintenance of those relationships following their graduation. Their desire to stay connected to the community indicates the importance of the charism, and the ways in which it has shaped their lives.

When the alumni graduate, many of them typically stay in touch. This is facilitated by formal events such as the reunion, but more commonly informally through attendance at sporting events and school liturgies. With the exception of the reunion, which is still rooted in the ordinary, the informal events are the epitome of ordinary, with simple conversation and community present by the choice of the alumnus to attend.

After alumni graduate, they have no obligation of any kind to stay in touch (or to donate, for that matter!). Every alumnus who attends a school event is acting upon free choice. Most alumni return because they want to see faculty or their classmates, which demonstrates the established enduring relationships, as well as the significance of those relationships to the alumni who participate.

The alumni are an extended community, made closer by modern communication technology. They not only are connected as a part of the larger Xaverian Brothers High School community, but also form their own smaller communities which reflect aspects of this radical spirituality.

A New Opportunity

To deepen, develop and maintain the Xaverian charism and spirituality, I propose a one-year residential service program. Eligible volunteers would come
from the ranks of recent graduates from undergraduate programs. The potential feasibility of this program can be inferred from the success of the AmeriCorps model. Moreover, similar programs such as the ones at Loyola Blakefield High School in Baltimore, Maryland and St. Joseph Preparatory High School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, have also proven to be highly effective. The participants would need to have graduated from one of the thirteen XBSS schools in order to be eligible. Participants would live together in community, in housing provided by the school or schools participating in the program. Schools would also provide a small stipend, room and board, and transportation, as well as health insurance and any other necessities.

Participants would be assigned to work within the school communities based upon the school’s needs, as well as their own academic backgrounds and experiences. While teaching is likely to be the most prevalent role, volunteers could be assigned to work within administration, admissions, business and advancement, athletics or campus ministry. Since all aspects of the school should be suffused with and guided by the Xaverian charism and spirituality, the experience and insight of the volunteers are helpful and welcome in each of these aspects of the life of the school.

I advise that schools select applicants who are not alumni of their particular institution. While the experience would likely be beneficial, it does not provide a new voice to the discussion of what Xaverian spirituality and charism look like and
how they are lived. A school working with volunteers who come from different Xaverian schools has the benefit of ‘new eyes’ experiencing the community, as well as a helpful dialogue partner engaging the similarities and differences of the lived experience. Admittedly, volunteers who serve at their alma maters have been in undergraduate study for four years, so they also bring a fresh view to the school based on their four years of undergraduate experience. However, their understanding of the Xaverian charism and spirituality as conveyed by the institution cannot have changed, since the alma mater would be their only point of reference. Since the goal is to continue to deepen the overall XBSS experience of Xaverian spirituality, then the most effective way to do so would be to engage with volunteers from other XBSS Schools.

**Program Structure Flexibility**

Before moving towards the macro and microscopic structure of the program, it is important to highlight that this program is intended to be presented as an option to all thirteen of the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools. As a result, the suggested design is not intended to be rigid or prescriptive. The design is meant to be flexible enough to be applied to the varied contexts of all of the schools, and easily adapted to their own daily life and schedule.

With that acknowledged, it is also important to have some sort of theoretical structure in order to avoid any sense of being untethered and vague. As a result, I will be using my own school, Xaverian Brothers High School, as a context to provide structure and scaffolding. Dates and assumptions will be based on that
model, but those dates could just as easily be shifted to address the difference in begin and end dates of academic years or vacations at the other schools. Also, while there is a proposed topical progression per month, this could be shifted around without harming the integrity of the program if the needs of a particular school make that change logical. Finally, since each volunteer could be placed in departments other than teaching (i.e. business, athletics, communication, advancement), there is no assumption that the participants are all educators.

A Conversation Regarding Covenant

One of the most important characteristics of this program is the recognition that there is a covenantal relationship between the Xaverian Brothers, their schools, and the volunteers. The application process and implementation should be created in a way that acknowledge the commitment of the Xaverian Brothers to this endeavor, but also the commitment of the volunteers to living a life in community as a faith journey. This cannot be simply construed as a job application, or as an activity in between completion of undergraduate studies and the “real world” that allows the participant to “find themselves.”

There are various levels in the program that can be considered to ensure that this sense of covenant is understood and manifested in a meaningful way. The application should have a component that allows the applicant to express understanding of the program and motivation for applying. A statement of purpose or personal philosophy should be written as part of the application, since it cannot
only provide insight for the candidate, but it can also be used at the end of the program as an evaluative tool. An interview process could also be used to better understand the applicant and to clarify this significance. At the beginning and conclusion of each yearly program, there should be a prayer service or Mass with specific rituals that signify the acceptance of responsibility and creation of relationship that this program, and, in the case of conclusion, a commissioning ritual that encourages the participant to manifest the lived reality of Xaverian spirituality to all whom they encounter. It is important that these rituals exist within the context of prayer, since the entire focus is the development and deepening of spirituality, and not merely a contractual obligation.

When possible, volunteers who work at different schools could live together in a centralized location. This allows for a larger community, and also for spirited discussion about the similarities and differences among the lived charism in their respective school communities. This creates a complication regarding inter-school collaboration, but could be easily remedied through a director of this program coordinating the specifics. Programming could be created and integrated into the system where the participants spend significant time with Xaverian Brothers in the surrounding community, enriching the ministry of both constituents. This all ensures that the volunteers do not exist within a vacuum, and helps to create a context for their collaborative work.
The Macroscopic Structure

The program will span approximately ten months, beginning in late August and concluding in early June. The school will provide for living accommodations, transportation, health insurance and a modest monthly stipend. Participants will live in community, and will not have any additional employment during this year of service. The program will be overseen by a faculty member or administrator, and each participant will also be assigned a faculty mentor. Readings and presentations that are connected to the topics will provide the opportunity for enrichment, and will be followed with weekly small-group faith sharing. Participants will be expected to pray and journal daily, and meet with their mentor weekly.

While individual schools are able to move around the order of these topics, there is an intentionality to the structure provided. In August, it is important to start with the topic of community, as the participants will be living in community together. Subsequently, each of the major topics starting in September are mirrored to a particular spiritual value that will be addressed five months later. As a result, the history and context of the Xaverian charism and spirituality is explored first. Then the spiritual values can be considered with greater depth and meaning later in the year.

Each month will also have an overall Sabbath theme. I have found the four-fold dynamic within Marvia Dawn’s approach of Ceasing-Resting-Embracing-Feasting to be an excellent way to reflect upon and understand the importance of
Sabbath and its counter-cultural dynamic in a post-modern world. Since each set of dynamics is built in a set of seven, I have assigned them as a set that makes the most sense given the monthly theme. While I recognize that Dawn intends these practices to center on the Sabbath day in particular, I believe reflecting upon them as an overarching monthly theme as a spiritual practice and discipline will bear much fruit overall. These Sabbath practices will certainly enhance an appreciation for the Sabbath itself, but they are also concrete, intentional ways in which the participants can grow in prayer and awareness of God, themselves, and one another. The final months will focus on the integration of these dynamics into a lived practice.

There will also be a focus on pastoral theology and the ways in which the intentional application of those principles can help enhance this program. Unless the design has an overarching pastoral plan, with careful oversight, there is the danger that the ministerial and apostolic work of the volunteers could lead to burn-out or frustration, with the worst case being spiritual malaise. Most importantly, pastoral care will ensure that Christ stays at the center of the program, encouraging ways of seeing God through Ryken’s experience, as well as the history and legacy of the Xaverian Brothers.

Below are the Sabbath themes, with a brief rationale and outline. Included are a passage from the *Fundamental Principles*, and spiritual and Sabbath

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151 Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*. Note that these themes will be used in the upcoming section, and are derived from Dawn’s major Sabbath themes.
practices that would be introduced in an intentional way that particular month. These are not intended to be exhaustive, but illustrative.

**August: Community**

Community is a key component of this program, because it places the participant in a unique environment intended to be reflective and supportive. This is in line with Ryken’s view of his own congregation as “a band of Brothers who mutually help, encourage, and edify one another, and who work together.” The idea of life shared in community also has biblical roots and is an ideal environment in which to create the intentional patterns of Sabbath practice which will support development of relationships, spiritual, and emotional growth (Acts 2:42-46, NRSV). This component would be approximately two weeks long, and exist before the first day of school. Participants will also spend time paying careful attention to the way in which this dynamic plays out in their own lives. Questions will be provided to guide journaling practices. Furthermore, mentor meetings will help keep this theme in mind throughout the month.

**August Fundamental Principles passage:**

> Your life with your brothers and sisters, centered on the word and worship of God is a sharing in the memory of Christ. You are called to be of one heart and one mind with them so that you can participate in the building up of the reign of God.

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152 Since citation would be unwieldy, all monthly “Fundamental Principles” quoted passages (unless otherwise noted) are from “Fundamental Principles,” xi-xvii.
An introduction to the importance of Sabbath, and the themes of Sabbath

Participants will learn to think beyond the concept of Sabbath as simply a day of prayer, and look at it as a way of life and a way of the importance of relationship with God, self, and others. In light of the theme of community, the shared living environment and the briefness of the “month,” special focus will be given to the importance of cultivating holy friendships.\textsuperscript{153} The entire service experience should be seen as a way to “deepen Christian vocation, nurture growth in the Christian life, and form [the participants] into a holy people.”\textsuperscript{154} It will also contribute to develop one another into “holy friends…who do not take advantage of our vulnerabilities, attempting to control or manipulate us…nor merely tell us what we want to hear.”\textsuperscript{155} This will not only pay dividends with regard to developing internal community, but also will be helpful as participants approach the students and colleagues in the upcoming months. The development of this trait will be very important to protect from burnout, and hyper-focus on work at hand.

September: Vernedering and the “Ordinary”

As mentioned, Ryken’s moment of conversion in his teenage years was foundational to his understanding of God and his vocation. Participants will focus on moments in prayer and in life when they have been “put in their place” and how this has helped them experience the “ordinary.” Special attention will be paid to the

\textsuperscript{153} Stone and Wolfteich, Sabbath in the City, 26.

\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 30.

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 32.
ways in which this has affected their relationships with God, self, and others. Participants will also spend time paying careful attention to the way in which this dynamic plays out in their own lives. Questions will be provided to guide journaling practices, and mentor meetings will keep this theme in mind throughout the month.

*September Fundamental Principles passage*

If you allow yourself to be formed by God through the common, ordinary, unspectacular flow of everyday life, you will gradually experience a liberation and freedom never before imagined.

*September spiritual and Sabbath integration practices*

*Ceasing: Ceasing our Enculturation*  
*Resting: Aids to Rest*  
*Embracing: Embracing Intentionality*  
*Feasting: Feasting on the Eternal*

As has been previously discussed, the “ordinary” is understood uniquely in the context of the Xaverian spirituality. Unlike the typical experience of life, the “ordinary” is the experience of a moment of understanding things at their most fundamental level. In this experience reality is seen as they actually is, and interconnectedness to God is clearly demonstrated. One of the clear themes is that in order to experience the “ordinary,” there has to be an intentionality to seeing past the way we are subject to the enculturation of the post-modern world we share. To that end, participants will be asked to reflect on the ways in which the culture they live in affects their personalities and their understanding of self and others. This is significant because through this understanding it allows the individual to be “freed…to express some aspect … that previously lay hidden.”

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156 Dawn, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly*, 47.
All of the practices have to be done by embracing intentionality, because it is through this deliberate practice and intention that any of these practices will bear fruit. Time must also be put aside to rest and reflect upon how these dynamics are impacting the life of the participant. Dawn grounds this concept of rest with two important questions: “what sort of practices or objects might help you to rest more completely in God’s grace? What is conducive to your having a deeper experience of God’s presence in a special way?” Participants will be asked to reflect upon these questions and how they can develop their own personal practices to help them better connect with the overarching themes of relationship with God, self and others. This intentionality and experimentation with practices will make it easier to see past the enculturation to discover the actual “ordinary.” Seeking this “ordinary” is seeking a connection and relationship with the “Eternal,” which is experienced in the celebration of the Eucharist in a particular way, but exists in the “ordinary” in a constant way. Recognition of the constant presence of God in all aspects of life, and a willingness to be formed by God are key to developing meaningful relationships in all aspects of life, and to better understand the personal vocation that God is calling each of the participants to understand.

**October: Falling in Love with God**

As Pedro Arrupe, S.J. would note almost 150 years after Ryken’s conversion, “There is nothing more practical than finding God, than falling in love

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157 Ibid., 84.
in a quite absolute, final way...Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything."\(^{158}\) The relational dynamic of relationship with God, self, and others will be explored, as well as what it means to fall in love with God. What do the interior and exterior realities of this movement look like? What are the obligations if an individual falls in love with God? Participants will also spend time paying careful attention to the ways in which this dynamic plays out in their own lives. Questions will be provided to guide journaling practices, and mentor meetings will keep this theme in mind throughout the month.

**October Fundamental Principles passage**

Ryken looked upon his original vocation as being a conversion through which he fell in love with the service of God.

*We now understand the translation to mean “turned to God, fell in love with God, and put himself in God’s service.*\(^{159}\) **This month will focus on the updated translation in light of the current passage.**

**October spiritual and Sabbath integration practices**

| Ceasing: Ceasing Anxiety, Worry and Tension | Resting: Spiritual Rest |
| Embracing: Embracing Our Calling in Life | Feasting: Feasting with Affection |

After a month of full time ministry within the school context, there is no doubt that the participants will be filled with all sorts of feelings, both positive and negative. One of the temptations is to focus on the negative, and catalogue the


\(^{159}\) Cruz, Working Papers, 23.
stresses that participants have begun to experience. Recognizing that all of these practices are intentional, the participants will be asked to focus upon the ways in which this service experience is creating anxiety, worry, and tension, and to be present to those moments. Once a participant recognizes that these are present in life, it becomes much easier to mitigate their impact on the day-to-day. Dawn notes that spending the Sabbath day, in particular ceasing from worry, provides refreshment, but in an overall practical context sharing individual anxieties, worries, and tensions in a community one lives in provides a refreshing level of support. It allows the individual to “focus on relationships” and through those relationships feel the positive and affirming experiences of service and ministry.¹⁶⁰

A key component of these relationships is love, which is at the root of Ryken’s conversion. Participants will be asked to reflect upon the ways in which affection and love in their relationships impact the three primary relationships in their lives, and in particular to appreciate and relish the sense of affection felt for them by others. The intentional recognition of love and affection naturally leads to understanding God’s call, and a willingness to put themselves in God’s service. While their vocation may not be what they are currently doing while serving their respective schools, it helps to begin to process where they most readily experience God’s love. This appreciation of love can only be experienced if the participants understand the necessity of spiritual rest, and that all of this is dependent upon

¹⁶⁰ Dawn, Keeping the Sabbath Wholly, 23.
God; “we can only learn how to rest when we are genuinely freed by God’s grace.”

**November: Freedom**

Freedom plays an important role in Xaverian spirituality. Human agency and intentionality allow for a response to God’s call that can be either yes or no. Ryken’s “great humiliation” was a moment to either turn away from God or turn toward God. Mary’s “yes” (Luke 1:38) and Jesus’s submission in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26:39, Mark 14:36, Luke 22:41, John 18:11) were moments of freedom. The choice to belong to community and to serve God are active, free choices, and all of the subsequent results are due to these choices. Reflection on this topic also results in a deeper understanding of the free will of other individuals, and an appreciation of their positive and negative attributes and choices in light of this freedom. Participants will also spend time paying careful attention to the way in which this dynamic plays out in their own lives. Questions will be provided to guide journaling practices, and mentor meetings will keep this theme in mind throughout the month.

**November Fundamental Principles passage**

Friend, you have freely chosen to respond to the call of God to live a life of love in faith and trust, as a disciple of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, in a Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School. In calling you God too was completely free. Your Founder, Theodore James Ryken, was most conscious of this, since he wrote about his own vocation: God is not obliged to give an account to anybody, even if God wants to use a sinner.

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161 Ibid., 55.
November spiritual and Sabbath integration practices

Ceasing: Ceasing Our Trying to Be God          Resting: Physical Rest
Embracing: Embracing the values of Christian Community   Feasting: Food

Participants will begin to reflect upon the fact that they have freely responded to God’s call, and with that response comes a sense of dependency upon God. This dependency implicitly states that we are not God, and yet culture indicates that we are supposed to be the masters of our own lives. Thus, even when this dependency is identified, it still can result in a cognitive dissonance where the individual depends upon God’s grace, but nonetheless seeks to manipulate his/her life to be in control. Ceasing the trial to be God is an act of will, and results in greater freedom to recognize God’s role in each life, as well as the ability to participate in the fullness of creation.

With this freedom comes the need to recognize not only the dependency upon God, but also that individuals are part of a much larger, intentional community. Participants will reflect upon the community values they share, both in the smaller lived community, as well as the greater Xaverian and Catholic communities. Through these values the participants will better understand the relationships in their lives and recognize that these shared values are “not rules hanging over our heads to clobber us if we get out of line, nor means for earning God’s favor...[but] are the instructions by which we learn God’s purposes and choose his designs in response to the overwhelming fullness of his love.”

162 Ibid., 112.
Special attention will be paid to the need for balance and physical rest, particularly with Christmas Break on the horizon. With the breakneck pace of the school year, it is often at this juncture when new teachers or those working in education realize that they are physically tired. Intentional reflection on ways to find time for physical rest is important. Participants will also be encouraged to recognize the ways in which food and sharing of food are invitations to embrace God’s presence. A special focus will be paid to the ways in which enjoying the weekly community meal on Sunday, is a time to savor the pleasure of food and the value of relationships. This is particularly timely as Thanksgiving approaches, and allows participants to seek the importance and significance of the other relationships in their lives in light of shared meals and their particular value.

**December: Enduring Relationships**

One of the hallmarks of the Xaverian Brothers is the creation and maintenance of enduring relationships. These relationships are framed in the context of relationship with God, self, and others. While relationships are necessary for the proper functioning of the community, enduring relationships require significantly more commitment and more openness. The significance of relationships in the lives of participants will be explored, as well as those that are developing with colleagues and students. Participants will also spend time paying careful attention to the way in which this dynamic plays out in their own lives. Questions will be provided to guide journaling practices, and mentor meetings will keep this theme in mind throughout the month.
December Fundamental Principles passage

You are called then by your Founder to enter into a true mutual sharing with your brothers and sisters. This sharing will demand of you an opening and a giving of yourself to them at many levels, and a ready acceptance of each of them in all their sinful and graced humanity. Cultivate a sincere friendship and a warm affection for your sisters and brothers, for it is in the manifestation of honest concern and love for each other that you and they will show you are daughters and sons of Ryken and disciples of Jesus.

December spiritual and Sabbath integration practices

Ceasing: Ceasing our Possessiveness  Resting: Social Rest
Embracing: Embracing Giving Instead of Requiring  Feasting: Feasting with Music

The month of December is truncated due to Christmas break, and as a result will provide the first sizable break that the participants could potentially spend away from one another. Since the participants will not be obligated to live together during Christmas break (though they are welcome to), many may take the opportunity to spend time with their families. In some ways, this will result in an opportunity for rest from the lived community, an opportunity for social rest in a very real and meaningful way. Participants will be asked to reflect upon their own lived communal life in light of this time apart.

Christmas season is also an excellent time to reflect upon how possessive we can be, and focus on the act of giving. These practices are key to understanding the gift of the Incarnation, but are also necessary to develop meaningful relationships and charity. Another hallmark of the Christmas season is the rich and varied music that marks the holiday. Reflecting upon the beauty, structure and lyrics of holiday music will naturally lead to a greater appreciation of music in general, and a critical analysis of the ways in which God can be appreciated in that
beauty. There is also an opportunity to reflect upon the ways in which music leads to enculturation in such an profound way so that “the Christian Church has become so encultured that we don’t realize we are encultured.”\textsuperscript{163} A Christmas music example of this can be seen in the stunning contrast between the ode to materialism and manipulation in “Santa Baby” and the tribute to God’s love and relationship in “It Came Upon a Midnight Clear.” This critical appreciation will naturally lead to a more critical awareness of the subtle ways the Christian life has to be intentionally counter-cultural.

\textbf{January: God’s Service}

Participants will return to school after approximately two-weeks of vacation. In many ways the start of January signals a new beginning and an opportunity to reflect upon the first half of the year. It also provides an opportunity to re-affirm a commitment to the service and ministry that they have been participating in over the previous five months. Participants should look into the experiences that they have had and consider whether their gifts and talents are being best used in order to respond to God’s call in a meaningful and true way. Special consideration will be given to Ryken’s response to his conversion to not only turn to God and fall in love with God, but to put himself in God’s service. Questions will be provided to guide journaling practices, and mentor meetings will keep this theme in mind throughout the month.

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 168.
January Fundamental Principles passage

Stand ready to answer when asked if you are available for God to become more present in your life and through you to the world. Like Mary, may you willingly respond: "Let what you have said be done to me."

January Spiritual and Sabbath Integration Practices

Ceasing: Ceasing the Humdrum and Meaninglessness

Embracing: Embracing Time Instead of Space

Resting: Emotional Rest

Feasting: Feasting with Beauty

Recognizing the significance of service can become difficult when the participant is distracted by the contents of life that have no meaning, but are yet consuming. The risk becomes that each moment and each interaction becomes routine, and that "life can become so humdrum, every day the same." Participants will be encouraged to look at each day as unique, and to pay attention to the uniqueness as moments of significance and time. In an appreciation of the uniqueness of "now," there is a subsequent notion of seeking how beautiful these moments are. Recognizing the beauty of the common helps to further see God's grace in the extraordinary, whether that be art, nature, or meaningful interactions with other individuals. The "new beginning" also offers the opportunity to reflect on the ways in which the participant has not been a good steward of emotional commitments and time. This provides an opportunity to encourage good emotional rest practices moving forward for the remainder of the school year.

164 Ibid., 48.
February: Humility

February marks the transition to the five spiritual values of the Xaverian Brothers as themes. The intent in this transition is to look at the prior six themes in light of that month’s particular spiritual value. In this case, humility allows for the development of a community without mean egoism, which results in the ready development of meaningful, holy, enduring relationships. Humility encourages the individual to embrace the moment of *vernedering* and develops a willingness to recognize the “ordinary” in the day-to-day moments. A greater appreciation of freedom is granted with humility, because humility allows individuals to appreciate their dependency on one another and God. It becomes easier to fall in love with God, accept God’s love, and put oneself in God’s service when humility helps the individual to recognize personal identity, and appreciate God’s grace and the significance of Christ’s Incarnation and Passion. Questions will be provided to guide journaling practices, and mentor meetings will keep this theme in mind throughout the month.

*February Fundamental Principles passage*

You have promised to follow Christ, the poor man, totally given in love to God and for all people everywhere, and whose loving obedience led Him to death on the cross…In this life of following Christ, allow yourself to be given away, together with your sisters and brothers, as nourishment for others, as bread that is broken.

*February spiritual and Sabbath integration practices*

Ceasing: Ceasing Productivity and Accomplishment  
Resting: Intellectual Rest  
Embracing: Embracing Wholeness – Shalom  
Feasting: Feasting with Festival
A greater understanding of humility results in the recognition that using productivity and accomplishment as measuring tools are merely egoistic ways of understanding success. Since “most of our inferiority complexes derive from the fact that we haven’t done everything we wish to do or that we haven’t been productive as everyone else,” humility allows for the participant to see success honest gifts and talents, and in the impact that they have in the relationships that are developed.\(^{165}\) This same hubris can also be derived, particularly in an academic setting, from an over-valuation of the intellect. While the intellect is necessary, it is important to develop ways to rest the mind and celebrate the emotional and spiritual, and in particular the relational.

Participants will be encouraged to reflect upon the integrative nature of “shalom,” and the movement toward wholeness in their own lives. All of the prior months have led to this understanding of wholeness across all of the various facets of life, and this month begins the process of integrating the prior months’ themes. This is also very intentional; in the same way that the six prior themes are being re-visioned through the lens of the spiritual values, the various ceasing-resting-embracing-feasting moments are being re-visioned in light of wholeness and integration.

\(^{165}\) Ibid., 17.
**March: Compassion**

Compassion calls the participant to recognize love and be-with-and-feel-with others as the root of enduring relationships and community. Compassion is what allows each person to transcend the “otherness” of the other and reach out to them and develop meaningful, loving connections. The value of compassion allows the experience of *vernedering* to be felt in the depth of God’s love, and the ordinary to be appreciated in light of God’s loving presence. It also encourages each person to understand the experience of the other’s *vernedering* with a sense of love and affirmation for their gifts and talents. Compassion fuels the desire to fall in love with God, particularly in light of Christ’s Passion and the sacrifice that has been made for all of mankind, but also in a personal way for the individual. Love is required for compassion, and love requires complete freedom without coercion; it is an act of the will. It is through this free will that the natural response of compassion is to desire action, and to commit to God’s service. Questions will be provided to guide journaling practices, and mentor meetings will keep this theme in mind throughout the month.

**March Fundamental Principles passage**

“Listen to your brothers and sisters, be compassionate with them in their difficulties, bear with them in their weaknesses, encourage and support them. Affirm your brothers and sisters in their gifts, for by doing so you enable them to realize the gifts that God has given them for service. In turn, allow them to affirm you and call you forth to even greater service of God.”

**March spiritual and Sabbath integration practices**

- **Ceasing: Ceasing Work**
- **Embracing: Embracing the World**
- **Feasting: Sabbath Ceasing, Resting, Embracing and Feasting**

101
This final month is the complete integration of the Sabbath practices that will be explored communally and individually throughout the remainder of the service experience. It may seem contradictory to wait until the end to appreciate and explore ceasing work because “physical rest is the first dimension that readily comes to mind when we think of Sabbath rest.” Nevertheless, because the enculturation of work-as-meaning is so deeply engrained it makes sense to wait until Sabbath is deeply understood before introducing this concept. The participant will have noticed by this time that so much of school is couched in work-heavy vocabulary: class-work, homework, hard-work. The other end of that work is the assessment and grading process by each teacher. Ceasing work and recognizing God in each person, and appreciating the real purpose of education can only be achieved once an individual is comfortable. As the participant enters the last third of their time on service, this is an appropriate time to explore this dynamic.

The remaining themes are also largely integrative. Reflection upon the past months highlight that the Sabbath practices have led to a “more comprehensive understanding of the nature of Christian ethics,” and that the pattern of ceasing-resting-embracing-feasting are a core way to help the participants understand God, self and others. The four-fold dynamic is also a challenge to the individual:

\[166\] Ibid., 50.
\[167\] Ibid., 55.
\[168\] Ibid., 95.
how do you pay attention to the interior and exterior life and not lose sight of what is important? These Sabbath practices place God firmly at the center of personal and community life, and have the opportunity to be transformational and the foundation for transformational leadership.

**April: Zeal**

Zeal is at the heart of the identity of the Xaverian Brothers because of the inspiration of their zealous patron saint, Francis Xavier. It is also necessary for any successful endeavor. Community and enduring relationships cannot be built without expending significant effort, desire, and passion. Zeal allows for the individual to respond to the impact of a *vernedering* and experience the “ordinary” with enthusiasm that affirms that person’s deepest gifts and talents. Zeal is what drives a people into action, and encourages them to utilize their free will to make change in the world. Zeal helps an individual to respond to falling in love with God by putting that faith into action and serving Christ. Questions will be provided to guide journaling practices, and mentor meetings will keep this theme in mind throughout the month.

**April Fundamental Principles passage**

Day by day you will need to renew your response. Do not become discouraged over the difficulties you encounter in your life of gospel service. Knowing that difficulties would be your share, your Founder judged: that nothing special is achieved without much labor, effort and zeal...Friend, “Go then to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples.” (Matt 28:19) These words of the gospel stand at the heart of the vision of your Founder. Within them is contained the mission and the ministry of your school community. Beyond this, Theodore James Ryken chose Saint Francis Xavier as the patron of the congregation so that “The name of this insatiable laborer for souls will indicate with one word what is intended for the congregation
April spiritual and Sabbath integration practices

Living the Sabbath Daily: Participants will work to integrate the practices they have learned into their life, and develop their personal gifts and talents, as well as their relationships.

May: Trust

Trust in God, self, and others is at the heart of understanding and developing enduring relationships, community, and faith. With trust, individuals can exercise their freedom to let go of attempting to be God themselves, and embrace the uncertainty that comes with serving God and listening for God’s call. Trust allows individuals to suffer the profound embarrassment or humiliation of the moments of vernederung with the hope that God will bring good out of those experiences, and that there is a meaning and a purpose to the experiences even if individuals cannot clearly see what it is. It allows each person to understand that those flashes of the “ordinary” are always there, but that it is we who fail to see them. All loving relationships are founded on trust, and so one cannot fall in love with God until one begins to trust God. The service of God is based on the trust that the ongoing discernment of vocation is being accurately responded to in the way in which we demonstrate that praxis. Questions will be provided to guide journaling practices, and mentor meetings will keep this theme in mind throughout the month.
May Fundamental Principles passage

At times you will discover that God’s ways are not your ways, and God’s thoughts are not your thoughts. When this happens, try to surrender yourself trustingly into the arms of your Parent God who knows you, understands you, and loves you. Perhaps you can repeat with your Founder this simple prayer which he cherished: “O Lord, I cannot understand your ways, but I must adore them.

May spiritual and Sabbath integration practices

Living the Sabbath Daily: Participants will work to integrate the practices they have learned into their lives, and develop their personal gifts and talents, as well as their relationships.

June: Simplicity

Simplicity is often the most difficult of the values to describe, but it has much to do with the “ordinary” aspects that are glimpsed in the moment of vernederung. This is the moment when a person is stripped down to the simplest self, with gifts, talents, strengths and weaknesses laid bare. Simplicity removes the complexities and trappings of life that separate the individual from God, such as the enculturated desire for money, prestige, and material objects. Embracing simplicity allows for the individual to recognize God’s presence in others and in the world, helping each person to more readily develop enduring relationships and through those relationships to create genuine community focused on Christ. Because simplicity creates a more-ready awareness of God’s presence, it becomes more likely the individual will fall in love with God and respond to that love with service. Questions will be provided to guide journaling practices, and mentor meetings will keep this theme in mind throughout the month.
**June Fundamental Principles passage**

Gradually, you will realize that the cost of your discipleship is your very life, freely consecrated to God and offered to the world as a sign of God’s love and care. The gift you have received, give as a gift.” ...As a follower of Jesus and in relationship with one another, keep ever before you the motto of the congregation: *Concordia res parvae crescent.* In harmony small things grow.”

**June spiritual and Sabbath integration practices**

Living the Sabbath Daily: Participants will work to integrate the practices they have learned into their life, and develop their personal gifts and talents, as well as their relationships.

**The Average Week**

The ebb and flow of much of the week will be based on the work demands of the school day, and on the roles that each person has in the community. Thus, I am approaching the weekdays with a significant amount of flexibility. The particular community can develop standards and normative behaviors that suit them best. What will be constant, however, is the expectation that each individual participant is engaging in daily prayer and journaling. In his document, “The Scheme,” Theodore Ryken encouraged all of his brothers to pray the *examen*.169 This practice of examination of conscience should be a daily prayer activity for each participant, with other styles of prayer to be utilized at the participant’s discretion and desire. The *examen* will allow them to see God’s presence more readily in daily life and respond accordingly. Participants will also meet once a

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week at a scheduled time with their assigned mentors, to discuss their experiences. Each mentor should be able to provide insight and encouragement to the participants, and, to some extent, will also function as a spiritual director, because each mentor should be able to help them “focus on how God is revealing God’s self through every dimension of human existence.” As the program progresses, the frequency of these meetings can be adjusted based on the mentor’s discernment and the needs of the participant. Participants will be encouraged to share meals together, but since the scheduling of any day can be unpredictable, this will not be a requirement.

Saturdays will be treated as “free” days for the participants, to utilize according to their own desires and needs. This could include visiting family and friends, or simply enjoying their own down time. Saturday provides an excellent opportunity for the participant to inculcate some of the Sabbath practices that they are encountering during the program.

Sundays will be treated with intentionality as both a Sabbath day and a community day. While the Jewish practice of Sabbath is deeply connected to Christianity, the identity of Sunday “must be protected above all and must be lived in all its depth.” Living this day in its full depth must be intentional, and it is from

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this observation that the application of the Sabbath practices must be enacted. The participants should attend Mass together, at a local parish of their choosing, and they should also plan to spend the entire day together. A group meal should be shared together, though whether that is shared as a large afternoon meal or a group dinner is at the discretion of the individuals within the community.

The community, in conjunction with the director of the program, should outline Sabbath practices that the community should engage in to aid in their growth and development. These may be revisited as the participants develop a deeper understanding for Sabbath practices and the way in which they are fruitfully manifested within the community’s life. Sunday should also be put aside for a weekly group faith sharing and reflection on the experience of the prior week and the thematic Sabbath practices that they have been incorporating into their lives. Thus, while the thematic Sabbath practices infuse each day with their potential application, Sunday is a time for their intentional practice.

Program Evaluation

It is important to note that some sort of mechanism of assessment and evaluation should be included with this process. Given the demands of living in community and of the individually paced development of the spiritual life and faith journeys, results in this being significant to function and understanding. I would suggest that these evaluations should exist in both formal and informal ways, but that all should be intentionally crafted to address the individual participant
holistically. The program director or individual participant mentor can take responsibility for the informal evaluation, simply through conversation and evaluation of the participant’s body language. Since they will be having regular meetings with their mentor, this is a natural extension of the mentor-mentee relationship. The mentor can then formally or informally check in with the program director to provide important insight and feedback.

Formal assessment could easily happen with the use of surveys, now so readily available online. While this has a value in terms of metrics, I am wary regarding this being the only form of formal assessment. I think that a formal exit interview with the program director and mentor would maintain the warmth and humanity of the process. The same survey questions could be easily asked in an interview setting. Questions should focus on the growth of the individual using the threefold structure of relationship with God, self, and others. The statement of purpose or personal philosophy suggested earlier regarding the application process and understanding of covenant is a helpful benchmark to determine growth in all three of these areas.

The program also needs to be evaluated regarding the central question of this thesis project. Is the program effective in developing and deepening the Xaverian charism and spirituality for the individual, the school, the XBSS network, and the Xaverian Brothers? The difficulty of this line of questioning is twofold. First, the fruits of the program may not manifest themselves until much later in the life of the institution, community and individual. Second, all of the data is of a qualitative
nature; therefore, it is difficult to assess and does not lend itself easily to the nature of metrics. Nonetheless, some sort of evaluative tool must be used to assess the functionality and meaning of the program itself.

Chapter 5

Future Program Benefits and Challenges

This program in its current form is entirely theoretical. Although flexibility has been built in so that it can serve the needs of the individual schools, the program as such has potential benefits and challenges. I will suggest that there are five major constituencies that this program will impact: participants, the school-as-community, the school-as-institution, the Office of Sponsorship, and the Xaverian Brothers. As such, I will suggest some of benefits and challenges that this program would create for each constituency. Although this is not meant to be exhaustive, it is meant to be comprehensive.

Participants are defined as the individuals who apply for, are accepted to, and who participate in this year of service following their undergraduate studies. School-as-community is the ‘snapshot’ of the school during one theoretical year of the program, while school-as-institution describes the school as the historical, corporate embodiment of tradition and history, and as a repository of their interpretation and historical lived experience of the Xaverian charism and spirituality. The Sponsorship Office is the Director of Sponsorship, as well as the office itself with all of its given responsibilities and duties. Finally, the “Xaverian
Brothers” refers not only to the order itself, but also the idea and collective memory of the order. If it should pass that vocations decline in such a way that the Xaverian Brothers should no longer exist as a corporate body, this discussion would still be valid because it would be honoring and maintaining the transformative impact that the Xaverian Brothers had on education and Catholic spirituality.

Future Benefits

Benefits and challenges are divided into the categories of temporal, spiritual, and social. Temporal refers to anything that deals with materials, commodities, money, insurance, and legalities. Spiritual refers to anything that deals with spiritual development or is connected to or impacts relationship with or understanding of God. Social, like the spiritual, is difficult to pin down, but speaks to the impact that this program would have on existing relationships or social structures.

Participants

Participants will benefit in a temporal way because they will not have to pay for their year of service. Participants would receive a small stipend, in addition to health insurance, room and board, and transportation. These benefits would be paid for by the school or schools that are participating in the program. In addition to the financial benefit, participants would be learning important job skills which would enhance their employability in the future. Each participant will have spent a year devoting their attention to spiritual exercises and disciplines, as well as
deepening their understanding of Xaverian charism and spirituality. If approached with an open heart and mind, this regimen of prayer, reflection, mentoring, and spiritual direction can only serve to deepen their relationship with God. The experience can also help them better understand their own nature and sense of spirituality within the Catholic context. Finally, participants will have established meaningful enduring relationships with one another, as well as members of the school community. These relationships can serve as valuable touchstones for future discernment and networking, as well as spiritual and emotional support.

**School-As-Community**

The school-as-community will benefit in a temporal way because it will be able to have volunteers functioning in professional roles at a fraction of the cost of full time employees. This also increases the number of faculty on staff, which allows for greater flexibility for coverage and oversight within the school. Also, extracurricular activities that begin at hours before or after the school day have additional opportunities for coverage since the participants are year-long volunteers with their focus on serving the institution. Moreover, participants bear witness to the transformational nature of the Xaverian Way. Their presence within the school year is a reminder to the entire community, but particularly the students, of the impact that the life and legacy of Theodore James Ryken and the Xaverian Brothers have had on the history of the school, as embodied in the present moment. Not only can their presence inspire and edify the community, but it is also
a testament to the value and validity of the Xaverian charism and spirituality. Lastly, participants serve as touchstones of relationships, and as reminders of the legacy and interconnectedness of the institution. On the faculty and staff level, the volunteers provide an opportunity to develop relationships that help the faculty grow in their understanding of the day-to-day lived experience of being at a XBSS School.

**School-As-Institution**

The institution does not directly benefit from the experience of the volunteers. The wear and tear and other financial decisions happen on a yearly basis, and do not influence tradition or institutional memory. In this regard, the program is net neutral temporally. The volunteers provide an increased depth and richness to institutional memory and spirituality, and provide a new lens to celebrate victories and remediate weaknesses. Also, the spiritual experiences of participants from other XBSS schools begin to become woven into the institutional experience and memory, particularly if this program were to run for a number of years. This would also result in schools developing a closer relationship with one another, a reality that has already been demonstrated by the annual XBSS Student Retreat which has been running for 20 years. In addition, these volunteers would become a part of the memory and social structure of the school, which impacts their connection with alumni, future alumni, and all other members of the community. Their contributions may be limited by the nature of their one year of
service, but they have nonetheless helped shape, in a small way, the nature and memory of the institution.

**Office of Sponsorship**

There is no direct benefit to the Office of Sponsorship. Since schools are picking up the costs of this program, there is no net cost to the XBSS Office. Yet, the XBSS Office has the opportunity to interact with and potentially assist in directing the volunteers at the various schools. This interaction would create a much larger, global picture of the lived expression of the Xaverian charism and spirituality that could be shared with all thirteen schools. As a central repository for all things XBSS, this program would be another useful resource for developing and deepening the collective understanding of the Xaverian Way, while at the same time providing an additional opportunity to understand the similarities and differences experienced at each institution. In short, the XBSS Office will benefit through the relationships that are made between the schools. The XBSS Office has already validated the importance of establishing enduring relationships between members at different schools by having their annual XBSS Student and Faculty retreats at centralized locations. At these locations, it allows for participants from different schools to get to know each other and develop community. If there were no benefit to relationships, retreats and orientations could be held at individual schools. This provides one additional opportunity for relationship development.
Xaverian Brothers
do not directly benefit from this program. One opportunity
that is available, however, is that employed or retired Brothers could live in
community with the volunteers. This would result in a slight decrease in the costs
shouldered by the Congregation, which is a marginal benefit at best. This program,
evertheless, adds to the existing understanding of Xaverian charism and
spirituality, but in a special way. Unlike the life of those men vowed to the
Congregation, and unlike career faculty and staff, these volunteers offer a very
specific perspective. The fact that they applied to volunteer means they are
responding to some sort of call that draws them to the Xaverian Way. This means
their reflection throughout the year has the potential to provide a richness and
perspective that adds another facet to understanding and appreciating the unique
qualities of the charism and spirituality. The process could lead to an increase in
vocations, even if modest. This program could be helpful for the Xaverian Brothers
living in and near the school communities. They could benefit from meeting the
volunteers and developing enduring relationships with them. While this would
certainly have a positive impact on the participants, it would also be edifying and
affirming for the Brothers, particularly those who are retired and are no longer in
apostolic work.
Challenges

All programming has challenges for structure and for participation. This is an attempt to anticipate possible challenges. This list is not exhaustive, but instead seeks to address expected difficulties, as opposed to unintended consequences. It is hoped, however, that the following structure makes it possible to anticipate and address challenges as they develop.

Participants

A small stipend and potentially heavy work load could be difficult for the participants to initially embrace. The lifestyle of living in community and essentially living a life of “voluntarily vowed” poverty could have an initial steep learning curve. Special attention should be taken by mentors and directors to ensure that participants adapt to this change, and that it continues to be successful for them.

Since each person encounters God and schedules prayer according to the rhythms of his/her individual life, it is possible that conflicting schedules could be difficult to initially adjust to. If participants are encouraged to attend the same church on Sunday, it may be a better fit for some than others. The most important consideration is careful supervision of the spiritual well-being of the participant by mentors and directors. While it is quite possible that the experience will be spiritually edifying, there is no doubt that the opposite can be also true. Mentors should be on the lookout for spiritual emptiness or malaise.
The nature of community and living in community will be one of the most significant challenges to the participants. Care should be taken to ensure living environment and conditions are conducive to community building. This involves big things like accommodations, and seemingly small things like the caution to not have three individuals living together as a group. Vigilance must also be maintained (and proper education provided) regarding proper boundaries between the volunteers and the students. Since volunteers are recent college graduates, they are close in age to some of the high school students, which can lead to a weakening of boundaries.

**School-As-Community**

The additional cost of the volunteers could be a burden for the school(s) that participate. Volunteers also use valuable resources within the school, such as classroom and office space, as well as supplies. While wear and tear would be minimal, additional people mean additional wear and tear on the day-to-day experience of the institution. The different perspectives of the volunteers from other XBSS schools could challenge the practices and rituals at the school. This could occur on a large-scale level, covering matters such as liturgy and school-wide prayer service, or at smaller levels, such as within a campus ministry program. In addition, each school has a natural ebb and flow of faculty and staff. Since these volunteers are only year-long volunteers, it guarantees a consistent yearly turnover of a small number of members within the community. There is a
challenge for all members of the community to be able to develop enduring relationships with the participants, while at the same time recognizing that their time within the community is temporary.

**School-As-Institution**

There is no overarching challenge to the institution itself. The day-to-day operations function within the school-as-community construct, and therefore any impact is dealt with in that circumstance. Certainly, there is a significant challenge to the inclusion of volunteers from other schools into the context of the life of the institution. Institutional memory also travels with institutional inertia, and institutional inertia can also respond negatively to challenge. The challenge will be for the institutional memory as stewarded by faculty, staff and administration to be able to hear and respond to challenges and different opinions of the volunteers. The flexibility and willingness to do this must come with the assurance that the institution isn’t losing its identity but rather deepening it in communion with the other thirteen schools, as well as the Xaverian Brothers. In the same way, the institution will need to embrace a new constituent to the life of the school’s history. Instead of the traditional delineation of administration, faculty, staff and students, volunteers will have to be added to that list. This means that they will play a role within the institutional memory and spirituality of the school itself. This role will have greater challenges and ramifications the
longer the program is in effect. This creates a historical before and after with the implementation of this program.

**Office of Sponsorship**

The XBSS Office should face no financial challenges, unless it is determined that the Office should be responsible for some part of financial support. Another possible temporal challenge will be if the Office is asked to administer this program across all thirteen schools, instead of each individual institution running the program itself. This would cost time and draw focus away from other endeavors. If the Office decided to hire a director of this program to oversee the schools that participate, this could also be a significant challenge. Finally, in its role overseeing the thirteen schools, feedback that creates divisions between schools as one school being ‘better’ than another in the experience of the volunteers could be challenging.

The greatest challenge will be for the XBSS Office to be open to, listen to, and integrate spiritual insights from the participants. This exists in two forms. First is being able to encounter and appreciate the insights, while the other comes from weighing the validity of the experience against the historical and spiritual context. The greatest social challenge will be juggling and maintaining yet another relationship layer within the XBSS system. The volunteers represent another group of individuals committed to and deeply impacted by the Xaverian charism and spirituality. At the same time, these individuals spend only a year working at the
institutions, and conceivably move on to work in an environment that is not an XBSS School. There is a tension between maintaining a meaningful relationship, while at the same time not draining any resources in the process.

**Xaverian Brothers**

The Xaverian Brothers do not face any challenges, unless schools approach them to finance or support this programming. The extent of that request is the extent of the challenge. This would also be challenging if Brothers were displaced to house volunteers. The spiritual concerns of challenge for the school-as-institution are echoed here. The developing understanding of the charism and spirituality are not exclusive to the vowed Brothers. What began initially as a charism and spirituality ‘owned’ by the Xaverian Brothers has now become interpreted by the various schools and the laypeople working and ministering within them. While the “ownership” has broadened, it also lends itself to practices and interpretations that may be frustrating to Brothers who feel that they are the exclusive stewards of this charism. The volunteer program adds yet another layer as it naturally compares and contrasts the various ways the schools live out this charism. If these bring up challenges to the traditional lived experience of the Brothers, there can be significant discomfort for them as they seek to wrestle with and consider integration of the insight. The volunteer program represents the overarching concern of a decline in vocations.
Thus, while the program is being created to maintain, deepen, and explore the charism and spirituality of the Xaverian Brothers, its existence is a reminder of that decline in vocations. This has sweeping challenges embedded in that simple statement. Brothers may be hesitant to interact with volunteers because of what they represent. The creation of this program could result in disillusionment, anger, depression and frustration. While hope and God’s grace spring eternal, and vocations are continually prayed and hoped for, the current state of affairs does not indicate a change in trajectory. This makes the proposal and implementation of this program a threatening counterbalance to the lived witness of the vowed Xaverian Brothers.
Chapter 6
Conclusion

It is my hope that my discussion and description of the nature of the Xaverian charism has added an additional level of both complexity and understanding to the collective body of knowledge. If that were the only outcome of this project thesis, I would be satisfied; however, I hope that this project also provides encouragement to the entire XBSS community and challenges complacency. The creation of the XBSS Office was based on the impetus of forward-thinking Xaverian Brothers who recognized its necessity and acted accordingly. It would be unfortunate if the members of the various schools were satisfied with simply being Catholic in their identity, instead of specifically Xaverian.

At the heart of this thesis is a sense that more can be done to enhance existing programs, and the service year component is a viable example. A cost/benefit analysis weighs heavily in favor of the benefits. This program could be beneficial to not only the Xaverian Brothers, but also other religious orders that seek to deepen their understanding of their unique charisms. The flexibility of the model can initially be viewed as a weakness, but that flexibility is what also allows it to be adapted to the unique circumstances of each institution. The creation of this program can generate transformational leaders for the future, and their presence in the school community will challenge other long-term faculty, staff, and administrators to respond in kind. The very presence of these volunteers within the community provides a visible reminder of the importance and value of the Xaverian
charism and the viability and importance of intentionally living out Xaverian spirituality in day-to-day life.
Appendix I: Ten Commitments of Lasallian Schools

The information contained in this appendix is provided for easy access to compare the Lasallian, Jesuit and Xaverian Schools. All content in this appendix was taken from the work of George Van Grieken, F.S.C. in *Touching the Hearts of Students.*

1. **Lasallian Schools are Centered on the Life of Faith**
   De La Salle’s overriding concern in all that he did was the life of faith, the reality of God’s saving presence in the midst of daily experience. Lasallian teachers readily share their faith life with their students, both in their zeal for education and in their daily personal encounters. In a Lasallian school God’s presence gradually becomes an evermore living and appreciated reality.

2. **Lasallian Schools Trust God’s Providence**
   De La Salle confidently rested in a complete and radical trust in God’s providential care for him, for the Institute, and for the work of education. Lasallian teachers share this radical trust by recognizing God’s face in every school or classroom situation. In a Lasallian school, self-sufficiency is not the final voice. The work is God’s work, first and last.

3. **Lasallian Schools Operate With Creativity and Fortitude**
   De La Salle’s commitment to the Christian Schools led him to make bold, creative moves in response to God’s Will. Lasallian teachers demonstrate the creativity of God’s Love through their daily resourcefulness and resilience, imagination and determination, ingenuity and persistence. In a Lasallian school the continual pursuit of innovative educational programs is the rule, not the exception.

4. **Lasallian Schools Cooperate With The Action of the Holy Spirit**
   De La Salle often prayed to the Holy Spirit for guidance and urged his teachers to do the same. Christ’s life is brought into the school by Lasallian teachers who are animated by the Spirit and willing to act accordingly. In a Lasallian school, the challenging, unpredictable, hidden life of the Spirit is given attention and heeded.

5. **Lasallian schools Incarnate Christian Dynamics**
   De La Salle educated the young in order to make God’s saving presence an active reality in their lives. Lasallian teachers seek and reveal God’s

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presence in the minutia of the exercise of their ministry. In a Lasallian school, Gospel maxims and Gospel norms provide the basis upon which its organizational and relational structure is built.

6. **Lasallian schools Strive to be Practical**
   De La Salle recognized the real needs of youth and taught what they needed in order to function in society. Lasallian teachers prepare students for their vacation and profession, for their personal life commitments, and for service to society and the church. Lasallian schools are realistic in their approach, methodology, and goals.

7. **Lasallian Schools are Devoted to Accessible and Comprehensive Education**
   De La Salle provided an education that was available to all who desired it and that comprehensively prepared youth to participate in their society. Lesallian teachers affirm that education consists of more than facts, figures and skills; that true education forms a person towards Christian maturity and responsible character. Lasallian schools intentionally educate a diverse range of students and provide a wide-range, comprehensive curriculum.

8. **Lasallian Schools are Committed to the Poor**
   De La Salle’s concern was for the poor, the neglected and the overlooked. Lasallian teachers give greater attention to the neglected, to the marginalized, and to the less appealing students. Service projects and outreach programs bring the poor’s voice into the lives of students. Lasallian schools are schools where programs that address the educational needs of the poor are an evident, clear priority.

9. **Lasallian Schools Work In Association**
   De La Salle’s efforts with teachers become more and more effective as he united them into a group with a common vision, a shared mission. Lasallian teachers come together as brothers and sisters associated with bonds of mutual respect, cooperation, generosity, patience, humor and humility. Lasallian schools are not autonomous schools but operate in collaboration with others to accomplish their common ministry of education.

10. **Lasallian Schools Express a Lay Vocation**
    De La Salle established a group of teachers who were to be dedicated to teaching as “Brothers” without directly being part of the clerical structures of the Church. Lasallian teachers reach out to their students in companionship, as older brothers and sisters, guiding their developing lives of faith and modeling the identity of a lay person in the Church.
Lasallian schools advance the role of the laity in the Church by educating towards responsible, active participation in the life of the Church.
Appendix II: Characteristics of a Jesuit Education

The information contained in this appendix is provided for easy access to compare the Lasallian, Jesuit and Xaverian Schools. All content in this appendix was taken from the Jesuit Institute of London in “The Characteristics of a Jesuit Education – An Abridged Version.”

1. Jesuit education is an apostolic instrument.
2. Jesuit education includes a religious dimension that permeates the entire education.
3. Jesuit education is world-affirming.
4. Jesuit education promotes dialogue between faith and culture.
5. Jesuit education assists in the total formation of each individual within the human community.
6. Jesuit education insists on individual care and concern for each person.
8. Jesuit education emphasizes activity on the part of the student.
10. Jesuit education provides a realistic knowledge of the world in which we live.
11. Jesuit education is value oriented.
12. Jesuit education proposes Christ as the model of human life.
16. Jesuit education serves the faith that does justice.
17. Jesuit education seeks to form ‘men and women for others’.
18. Jesuit education manifests a particular concern for the poor.
19. Jesuit education is an apostolic instrument, in service of the church as it serves human society.
20. Jesuit education prepares students for active participation in the church and the local community for the service of others.
22. Jesuit education witnesses to excellence.
23. Jesuit education stresses collaboration.
24. Jesuit education relies on spirit of community among teaching staff, administrators, Jesuit community, governing boards, parents, students, former students and benefactors.

25. Jesuit education takes place within a structure that promotes community.
26. Jesuit education adapts means and methods in order to achieve its purposes most effectively.
27. Jesuit education is a system of schools with a common vision and common goals.
28. Jesuit education assists in providing the professional training and ongoing formation that is needed, especially for teachers.
Appendix III: Xaverian Brothers Vision, Spiritual Values, Calls and Goals

The information contained in this appendix is provided for easy access to compare the Lasallian, Jesuit and Xaverian Schools. All content in this appendix was taken from the Office of Sponsorship and is cited by section.

Vision174

1. Enduring Personal Relationships
2. Stewardship for God’s Creation
3. The Centrality of Religious Instruction, Spiritual Formation, Worship and Prayer
4. A Challenging Educational Program
5. A Spirit for Harmony
6. A Passion for Justice and Peace

Spiritual Values175

1. Compassion
2. Humility
3. Simplicity
4. Trust
5. Zeal

Calls and Goals176

1st Call: The call to stewardship for the Church’s mission and ministry of education in the tradition and spirit of the Xaverian Charism.
1st Goal: Leaders of a Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School are selected, formed and supported for governance and administration so that they have an understanding of the stewardship they share with the Xaverian Brothers and the mission of the School.
2nd Call: The call to become centers of faith that articulate, transmit and live the teachings of Jesus Christ as found in the scripture and the authentic tradition of the Catholic Church.
2nd Goal: The Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School will implement programs and activities for transmitting the Catholic faith.
3rd Call: The call to affirm and celebrate life more abundantly in Christian Community.

174 “Vision.”
175 “Spiritual Values.”
176 “Calls and Goals.”
3rd Goal: The Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School will seek to form Christian community by deepening the understanding of Jesus Christ’s teachings about life and by affirming and celebrating significant moments in the life of the school community. As a Christian community the Xaverian Sponsored School will welcome and affirm the giftedness and dignity of each person, respect diversity and create a caring atmosphere in which human relationships can grow and thrive.

4th Call: The call to provide a challenging academic program that promotes the full development of each person’s giftedness.

4th Goal: The Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School implements an educational program so that it responds to students’ needs, challenges students to learn, to appreciate and develop personal talents, and prepares them to make their contribution to the betterment of humankind.

5th Call: The call to be a center of Christian concern for justice and peace.

5th Goal: The Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School will be a center of active Christian concern for Gospel justice by modeling just practices and by educating and forming their students in their attitudes, values and competencies needed for a life of Christian service and social consciousness.

6th Call: The call to value and support the dignity and self worth of those directly involved in the church’s ministry of education.

6th Goal: Recognizing that the ideals of a Xaverian education are realized through the dedication and talents of all school personnel, the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School will devote the attention and resources needed for the personal and professional development of teachers and support staff.
Appendix IV: Xaverian Mission Statements

The information contained in this appendix is provided for easy access to compare the mission statements of the thirteen Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools. Each mission statement is taken from each individual school as cited.

Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools Mission Statement

The Mission of the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools flows directly from the mission of the Congregation of the Xaverian Brothers which is: “To serve the Church in its work of evangelization, particularly through the Church’s ministry of education.” Today Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools are located in several countries and situated within very distinct cultures. This international dimension of Xaverian Sponsorship makes real the universality of the Church’s mission of evangelization. Enriched by cultural pluralism, Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools are challenged to understand, respect, affirm and celebrate the diversity of cultural values and worldviews. The Gospel of Jesus Christ forms the core belief that impels the educational ministry of the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools. Within their distinct cultural contexts, Xaverian Brothers Sponsored schools strive to respond to the call of evangelization by focusing on three important dimensions:

I. Proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ for the purpose of understanding His message about life as found in the Gospels and the authentic tradition of the Church.

II. Creating a community of faith in which all members of the school can encounter Christ and experience and celebrate the meaning of Christian living.

III. Preparing students to understand life in light of the Gospel imperatives that call all believers to discipleship, using their talents and competencies to build the Kingdom of God with justice and love of neighbor.

Aware of the developments and ever-changing needs of the time, the Congregation, Corporate Members and representatives of the school communities periodically articulate the Vision, Values and Goals that give direction to the educational activities of the Xaverian Brothers Sponsored Schools.

177 “Mission.”
Lowell Catholic Mission Statement\textsuperscript{178}

Lowell Catholic challenges students to:

- EXCEL in their academic efforts and hold learning in high esteem.
- PREPARE for productive lives as active members of their future communities.
- LIVE Jesus’ message to love God, our neighbors and ourselves.

In carrying out our Mission, Lowell Catholic promotes:

- An active and informed personal discipline and honorable character to which this leads
- Respect for all of the many cultures from which our families come.
- Independent thinking, effective communication, skilful individual and cooperative work, a safe physical and social environment, teaching that is intellectually sound, fair and personally engaged, and productive relation with our students’ families.
- Commitment to useful service to the Lowell Catholic community and to the larger communities of which it is a part, for we believe that to serve is to continue Christ’s unfinished mission.
- An appreciation of Catholic ideals and the values of human dignity, personal responsibility, the importance of family, informed citizenship and conscientious moral decision making.

The school’s philosophy embraces the teachings and principles of the Roman Catholic Church. The community is a special blend of people who care deeply about and communicate effectively with one another and with talented students interested in learning. The school’s focus is the education of the whole student, of which a basic element is a comprehensive academic program. Enriched by all they have learned and experienced, students graduate from Lowell Catholic prepared for college and personal life, understanding their moral responsibility to the global community.

Malden Catholic High School Mission Statement\textsuperscript{179}

Malden Catholic High School, a private Catholic school sponsored by the Xaverian Brothers, creates a community of faith that promotes the dignity and respects the diversity of all through Gospel values and an environment that fosters the love of God, of self and of others. Dedicated to the spiritual, intellectual, creative, social and physical development of young men, Malden Catholic offers a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum, sensitive to individual needs. It prepares students for life in a Catholic, familial atmosphere.


Mount Saint Joseph’s High School Mission Statement

Mount Saint Joseph is a Catholic, college preparatory school for young men sponsored by the Xaverian Brothers. Faithful to the tradition of Xaverian education, Mount Saint Joseph strives to be a community of growth and learning characterized by enduring personal relationships, and emphasis on spiritual formation, a challenging academic program, and a commitment to justice and peace.

As a Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School, we view education in terms of message, community, worship, and service. The students and faculty are inspired to appreciate the faith in their lives, to understand community in a global as well as local sense, to experience personal and communal prayer, and to realize the service to others is basic to the gospel message of Jesus.

We view academic excellence as an achievable goal for all the students as each one learns and grows according to individual talents. WE believe that the total education of each student necessitates and active collaboration with parents.

We encourage participation of each student in a well-developed program of athletics and extra-curricular activities which complements our educational endeavor. The entire school is committed to the progressive fostering of self-discipline and independence while maintaining the primary importance of providing an environment in which all students can learn to become educated, contributing citizens of the world.

Nazareth Regional High School Mission Statement

Nazareth Regional High School is a Catholic college preparatory high school sponsored by the Xaverian Brothers. We maintain a rigorous academic environment where students develop a life-long intellectual curiosity which empowers them to think independently in an ever changing global community. We provide unique opportunities that develop students' spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth. Our scholars are prepared to be successful, contributing members of society.

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Our Lady of Good Counsel High School Mission Statement

At Our Lady of Good Counsel High School, a Catholic high school sponsored by the Xaverian Brothers, we inspire our students to excel, serve and love. A Good Counsel education provides young men and women the opportunity to reach beyond the merely “good” and too succeed beyond their perceived limits. Through our mission, vision and Xaverian educational philosophy, students will learn to flourish and become the best version of themselves. Delivering on our mission means we will have cultivated a disposition among our students that has them engaged in seeking to excel, serve, and love, both now and well beyond their days at Good Counsel.

- EXCEL | Learning to excel looks different for each student. Our young men and women will be encouraged to achieve their best in various contexts including, academic preparation, arts, extracurricular activities and more.
- SERVE | Developing a commitment to service is central to the Good Counsel experience. Engagement in service connects powerfully to our identity as a Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School and our core values of simplicity, humility, compassion, zeal and trust.
- LOVE | Our Catholic school mission is tied to the words of John’s Gospel: “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” In our Christian community, we welcome and affirm the giftedness and dignity of each person, respect diversity and create a caring atmosphere in which enduring personal relationships can grow and thrive.

Saint Bernard School Mission Statement

Saint Bernard School, a Catholic co-educational school, co-sponsored by the Diocese of Norwich and the Xaverian Brothers, admits students from grades 6 through 12. Enriched by values attentive to the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Saint Bernard School community is committed to a challenging college-preparatory education for students of all faiths. Saint Bernard School provides a safe and supportive environment which promotes academic achievement and generates growth in maturity, behavior, character and service to others.
Saint John’s High School Mission Statement

Saint John’s High School is a Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School. A Saint John’s Catholic education is rooted in the commitment of the Xaverian Brothers to bring Christ to life in young men. For over one hundred years, a religious and lay staff has assisted students in discovering and developing their God-given talents. As a college preparatory school, Saint John’s fosters the formation of the whole person: spiritual, intellectual, creative and aesthetic.

At Saint John’s, students pursue personal growth in an environment that recognizes a moral dimension of life. A challenging academic program encourages love of learning as a stimulus for continued intellectual development. Students learn to appreciate the world’s beauty while exploring, developing and expressing their creativity.

Saint John’s is a Christian community, founded upon the ideal of the interdependence of individual members. In that context, students shape their identities as unique individuals with mutual obligations. Respect and appreciation for individual differences and those who comprise the larger community is an important part of the growth process of a St. John’s student.

In the tradition of the Xaverian Founders, Saint John’s High School has been committed to students from a diversity of backgrounds, and affirms its commitment to providing opportunities to families in need, to the marginalized, and the poor.

Saint John’s Preparatory High School Mission Statement

St. John’s Prep, a Catholic, Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School for young men in grades 6 through 12, is committed to educating the whole person. Our rigorous academic and extensive extracurricular program encourages students to develop their spiritual, intellectual, moral, physical, and creative potential, and inspires them to honor the diversity that enriches both our school community and the world beyond St. John’s. We challenge our young men to grow in faith and wisdom, to promote human dignity, to act with compassion and integrity, to pursue justice and peace, and to live lives of service to society.

Saint Mary’s Ryken High School Mission Statement

St. Mary’s Ryken is a Catholic, coeducational, college preparatory school community operated under the Xaverian Brothers’ sponsorship dedicated to academic excellence and individualized student growth.


Saint Xavier High School Mission Statement

Saint Xavier High School, a Catholic college preparatory school sponsored by the Xaverian Brothers since 1864, engages young men in rigorous academic programs and extracurricular activities that foster respect, honor and service to God’s world.

Saint Xavier High School, faithful to its Xaverian heritage, strives to build a Catholic community of faith that calls young men to embrace Gospel values and prepares them to share in the life of God through lives of generous service to the world. We seek to develop the gifts and talents of each student through holistic efforts based in rigorous academics, the arts, competitive athletics, intramurals, extracurricular activities and vibrant campus ministry programs.

As a college preparatory school, St. X admits students of diverse faiths and abilities who demonstrate potential for completing our four-year, liberal arts and sciences curriculum and who desire a Catholic education. Our programs of study challenge students to grow intellectually and think critically, welcoming students with different learning skills and mild learning differences. Exceptional instruction, guidance and coaching build enduring relationships while helping students to develop leadership skills, self-discipline and the attitudes essential for higher educational success and for becoming confident, capable and responsible stewards in a global society.

Xavier High School Mission Statement

As a Catholic college preparatory school sponsored by the Xaverian Brothers and the Diocese of Norwich, Xavier High School fosters the spiritual, academic, and physical growth of its students and challenges them to use their God-given talents in service to others so that each Xavier graduate is fully prepared to respond to the Christian call of our school motto, “Be A Man”. We guide all students in educational and vocational needs, helping them prepare for college, for work, and above all, for life itself.

Xaverian Brothers High School Mission Statement

Xaverian Brothers High School, a Catholic college-preparatory school for boys, cherishes its identity as a Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School. Drawing on the traditions of the past, living in the strength of the present and preparing for the needs of the future, Xaverian Brothers High School is a community of faith and learning that is committed to developing the integration of spiritual, moral,

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intellectual, physical, emotional, cultural and social dimensions within each young man. Through participation in academic, extracurricular, athletic, and campus ministry programs, a Xaverian graduate will be prepared to meet the demands of higher education, to contribute to society, and to answer the call of Christian service.

**Xaverian High School Mission Statement**

Xaverian High School is a college preparatory school which provides educational opportunity for learners of all types. Rooted in the missionary charism of St. Francis Xavier and consistent with the principles and commitment of the founder of the Xaverian Brothers in America, Theodore Ryken. Xaverian High School is dedicated to the development of the person through academic excellence, extracurricular involvement and Christian service to neighbor and community. Faithful to the spirit of its founder, Theodore James Ryken, Xaverian High School responds creatively to the challenges of the present and the future by being a place in which people are attentive to the Lord’s call to learn, to serve and to become contributors to the freedom, beauty, and wholeness of themselves and others: where people are prepared to serve their brothers and sisters in ways that are appropriate to their dignity as children of God, and thus become persons living in close relationship with Jesus, their brother.

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Bibliography


Vita