

Second-year novice Keith Maczkiewicz spent his long experiment at Georgetown University as a campus minister and teaching assistant.

In the fall, when the novice director and I began talking about a possible Long Experiment placement, I had only a single request: I think I'd like do something that I haven't done before. This was easier said than done. After all, I had worked in a high school for two years in campus ministry and then in a Jesuit university campus ministry office for another two years before I entered the Jesuits. With education as a major apostolate for the Society, I was really asking for something outside the box. Works in Ignatian spirituality and spiritual direction appealed to me, I said. Is this possible? After a series of phone calls and some research into possible placements, the novice director came back with an update, just as I was coming off an eight-day silent retreat: there didn't seem to be any placement that would work in this area. It was back to the drawing board.



There was, however, a placement at Georgetown University to which he would consider sending me. It involved work in campus ministry (including retreats, liturgy, prayer opportunities, etc.), dorm chaplaincy, acting as a teaching assistant in a theology course, and a service trip opportunity to Belize. With the exception of the teaching assistant role, I had done almost all of this work during my time as a campus minister at The University of Scranton before I entered the Jesuits. "You may have done this job before," my novice director said, "but you never did it as a Jesuit." I had really enjoyed my previous work in campus ministry and so could easily see myself at Georgetown for the semester. It was all settled, then. I headed to Washington just after our Christmas break and settled into the community, just before the start of classes. I was excited to begin again!

When the semester began I waded into the familiar: freshmen retreats through the ESCAPE program, Sunday liturgies at the campus chapel, Catholic chaplaincy programs and retreats and ministry as a chaplain-in-residence in a freshmen dorm. Additionally, I stepped into the role of teaching assistant in a class entitled "The Church in the 21st Century," taught by Kevin O'Brien, SJ, and joined the Jesuit community at daily Mass and meals in Wolfington Hall, the Jesuit residence. As I grew into my role at Georgetown, I realized that my novice master was exactly right: life as a Jesuit had changed the way I approached campus ministry.



Firstly, I was now living intentionally the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in a way that I wasn't when I was a layman. Being mindful about how I was spending my money, my free time, and recognizing my increasing reliance on the Jesuit community were all new experiences that paralleled the familiar experiences of the ministry. Yet even in the ministry I noticed a significant difference: the role of the *Spiritual Exercises* in my life and in my work had changed radically. I was very conscious that the seminal experience of my novitiate, the Long Retreat, was affecting all of my life and ministry, from the residence hall chaplaincy, to the work in the classroom, and certainly in preaching, leading prayer and directing retreats. I realized that the *Exercises* had become not only important to me, but had become my heritage, in a way, had become an inherent part of my life.

So, too, did I realize during this Long Experiment at Georgetown my closeness with Jesus, in a way that I wasn't always conscious of before Entrance Day. Working with the *Exercises* as an instrument of prayer, and helping to lead others in prayer and discernment, really helped me to solidify my own relationship with God, the Father and with Jesus, his Son. Long Experiment has, in a way, helped me to fall in love with Christ all over again in the midst of my ministry, in the context of my Jesuit community, and with the lenses of poverty, chastity and obedience focusing, broadening, and enriching my life. In that, I guess my novice master and I were both right: I was looking for something I had never done before, and he insisted I hadn't. God is good!



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