

Cura Personalis

Cura Personalis is a way of living life present to yourself and to others. It can help young leaders learn about their own gifts and talents and understand how to connect with others on a deeper level. It can also help youth ministers better reach the youth population.

In Latin, Cura Personalis means “Care of the Whole Person.” It is one of the cornerstone tenets of the Jesuit educational philosophy. There are two parts: “caring of Self” and “caring of Others.” We strive to fully love ourselves and others. We are completely present to ourselves and/or to the other person. There are three key ingredients to Cura Personalis. They are:

- Looking deeply into the person in order to see his or her gifts, weaknesses, challenges, needs, and desires.
- Helping the person grow in his or her relationship with God.
- Envisioning and caring for the person as God envisions and cares for him or her.

This may sound straight-forward and it is! Yet, it also requires a genuine concern for the person and an open heart to God. We must be completely aware of the person’s needs. We must learn to let down our defenses which have served us well in this American individualistic society and embrace the openness and humility of God present in our lives. We must trust ourselves, God, and others in order to fully be open to the spirit of God moving through Cura Personalis.

Care of the Self

The first part of Cura Personalis is learning to be attentive to yourself and your needs. After all, how can you care for others if you cannot care for yourself? How can you know others if you do not know yourself, the person you should know most intimately? As Jesus said, let’s remove the logs from our eyes so we can clearly see how to help others.

One way to understand yourself is to set aside time throughout the day just to be alone with your thoughts. Allow yourself to feel whatever feelings are welling up inside of you. Notice thoughts that slip into your mind and determine if those are the things you are the most passionate about or just distractions from your truest self. Above all, allow the Spirit to be present within you as you are reflecting over these things. That way, you can see your needs, your wants, and your entire self as God lovingly sees them.

Care for Others

Once you have taken care of yourself mentally, physically, emotionally and spirituality, you now have a clear mindset to help others. If you find your mind wandering back to your own preoccupations during your care for others, this is a sign that you might need to sort out some of your own issues first.

When you first meet someone, take personal interest in them and be completely present to them. Remember their name first and foremost. If you can, connection with them personally. Find something that really speaks out to you, that would allow you remember them even after the initial conversation. Let the flow of the conversation happen and don’t try to force the conversation into a set formula or script. After all, every conversation has its own spirit, its own life. Finally, once the conversation is finished, pray for the other person. Ask God to watch over their needs or even to help you see the beauty of that person. Thank God for that person for gratitude leads to appreciation and acceptance.

If you do have a chance to meet those people again, try connecting deeper with them. This is your opportunity to form a lasting relationship with them. Pick up where you left off, remember what you found most interesting about them and use it as a launch point for the conversation. Affirm any positive traits that the person has and highlight their characteristics. Be attentive to their needs, whatever comes up in the conversation, and allow them to extrapolate if they feel comfortable. Be supportive and show them that you care. Empower them. Encourage them to become proactive and extend a hand to them. Invite them to events or let them help you with a task or project. By working and being together, you strengthen bonds and communicate your acceptance of them. Finally once again, pray for them and pray for yourself. Pray that you might see them as God would and pray for their needs and their fulfillment.

Cura Personalis revolves around the idea of accepting people for who they are and ministering to their needs. As such, there is not set format for Cura Personalis; the only purpose is to be completely present to their needs and support them. There is no urgency to solve their problems, they can do that themselves. Simply walk with them on their journey.