

**NEXT ISSUE'S THEME:
FORMATION IN A TIME OF CRISIS**

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Fear, the ancient enemy of faith, has resurfaced with dramatic intensity in our times. As I pen these words, the coronavirus pandemic is sweeping the globe, seeding fear and social isolation wherever it goes. Fear is just as contagious as any virus. This recent re-emergence of fear, even panic, did not start with the latest virus. It started years ago with the fear of terrorism, and then it generalized into the fear of the stranger, which some politicians around the world have stoked into hatred. Volume 28 of *Reflective Practice* focused on formation and ministry in the presence of fear. But since 2008, fear and hatred have continued their march onward, now generating more polarization and social isolation. The prescribed social distancing that we are all mandated to practice to contain this viral epidemic only reflects the larger trends toward social isolation and polarization that have been around for a while.

So as I sign off after six wonderful years as Editor of *Reflective Practice*, I am wondering what ministry is like in this age of fear and social isolation. How has your spirituality fared in managing fear in yourself and people you serve? In what ways has your theology adapted and changed? What has remained constant?

Foundationally, ministers and chaplains are about “connecting with people,” and so how do we “connect” when we must practice social distancing? What adjustments have you made to your practice, to your training and supervision of students, to your leadership style in your chosen community of faith? How does the growing fear of the stranger and polarization of modern life impact your patients, your employing institution, your experience of the Divine? In the midst of adaptation to a new, if temporary, normal, where have you seen the Divine at work in ways that generate hope?

I hope you will reflect on these questions, write up something, and fill the pages of this beloved journal in the years ahead. I will look forward to reading it all.

Scott Sullender, Editor

