



SECTION 4 SUSTAINING PRACTICES IN A TIME OF CRISIS

Editor's Introduction

Spiritual formation is a significant part of ministerial formation. In the normal course of events, priests, rabbis, pastors, chaplains, and other ministers experience stress that drains. The self-aware minister turns to practices that they have learned sustain them in these seasons.

In this past year however, the sustained impact of multiple pandemics has created particularly demanding—some would say oppressive—spiritual challenges. In the previous section, Mark Chung Hearn hints at the weariness that many of us have felt: “How am I and so many other post-secondary educators and/or religious leaders of various faith traditions to respond in this time of great need, particularly when we ourselves are having to adapt and care for loved ones of our own?”

In this section, four colleagues reflect on spiritual practices they have employed that sustain and support the weary student, spiritual directee, patient, and themselves.

Gail Marie Henderson narrates her own story of disorientation when her diocese, the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario, delivered three pastoral announcements. Among them was a call to “Fast from the Eucharist and Feast on God’s Word.” For Henderson, the practice of *lectio divina* provided the space for active listening, feasting, and connection with God that sustains. Further, she believes it is an essential practice to incorporate in graduate programs preparing ministerial leaders.

In a similar vein, John McNally draws on his training in spiritual direction to provide a centering space for students. SELAH, both a method and an acronym, is informed by the notion that the *Selah* that frequently ap-

pears in the psalms invites us to take time for a contemplative pause rather than rushing to the next thought. McNally describes the method and commends its use with student groups.

Bill Haley narrates his experience of making adaptive changes to the spiritual discipline of offering a listening, prayerful presence to another while journeying and listening together with God in spiritual direction. The constraints he encountered due to the pandemic, when reframed, became opportunities for connection with a wider circle. The staff of Coracle, the center which he directs, were similarly surprised to find new ways of doing ministry consistent with their mission of “spiritual formation for Kingdom action.”

ACPE Educator Caitlyn Bailey begins her article on using art in spiritual care with a case study filled with anguish and fear. Her artful use of Psalm 121 helped her care-receiver explore her fears and ground herself in the God of the psalm. Bailey and second year CPE resident Zaccheaus Katta go on to share the range of art they employ and how they care for patients and staff. They also share their SpirituARTy process, which allows groups to process their experience and collectively create art to express their new insights.

As a collective, the authors of these essays do not shy away from the fact that the multiple pandemics of 2020 impact us as whole persons. They direct us to sources of healing and spiritual refreshment.

Matthew Floding
Editor