

# REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

## VOLUME 42



### *Editors' Introduction*

Who would have guessed that we would still be in the thick of the COVID-19 pandemic nearly two years later? In early 2021, when we began planning for this volume of the journal, we had reason to hope that, by the time of publication of volume 42, our professional and personal lives would have returned to something next to normal. Those of us who serve in healthcare settings had just received our first doses of the Pfizer-Biontech or Moderna vaccination. We who are field education supervisors, spiritual directors, pastoral theologians, and professors were slated for vaccination in the spring. With new life and a sense of possibility on our minds and hearts, we selected the theme “Flourishing in Ministry.”

Of course, 2021 didn't unfold as we all would have hoped. Tragically, COVID-19 in all its variants has left over 800,000 dead here in the United States, over 30,000 dead in Canada, and over five million deaths globally (at the time of this writing). Public health measures have meant that we have had to continue to adapt our usual practices and adopt new ones so that we might continue the important work of experiential theological education. Your resilience was reflected in the volume 41 contributions, documenting the myriad shapes formation took place during this disruptive time. While we had hoped to have long ago changed our relationship to the masks, the on-line meetings, and the social distancing, the theological reflection and practical wisdom found in that volume of *Reflective Practice* continues to offer us guidance and insight.

At the dawning of 2022, we are grateful to consider the theme of flourishing in these pages even as we still contend with the daily grind of this pandemic. The work of teaching and training future spiritual caregivers, congregational clergy, theologians, and spiritual directors requires of us the

Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry

ISSN 2325-2847 (print)\* ISSN 2325-2855 (online)

\* © Copyright 2022 *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry*  
All Rights Reserved

capacity to hold complicated and sometimes seemingly contradictory concepts in tension. To be prophetic and pastoral often asks of us the capacity to hold paradox. Indeed, the fact that the same moment in spiritual care supervision can call for both a pastoral and prophetic response is, in itself, a kind of paradox. Even as we've mourned what we've lost over these two years of the pandemic, many of us have had new ministry opportunities and changes in positions, acquired new skills, or found new partners who have energized us. Even as we've been tired, we've had days of exhilaration. Even though we have had days of languishing, so, too, have we found ways to flourish in our supervision.

Of course, our world is always full of paradox, all the more so today. Some justice has been found in the George Floyd verdict, but at the same time it serves to remind us how much more work lies ahead to address systemic racism. COP26 underscored our need to unite as a globe to address climate change. One hopeful sign is the agreement of more than 140 countries vowing to end deforestation. The countries include the US, Brazil, Russia, and China, and others that together comprise over 90 percent of the world's forest cover. At the same time, COP26 reminded us that the most vulnerable in our world are also the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

In the midst of paradox, personally, professionally, and globally, we take time to notice, celebrate, and learn from the places and practices where CPE educators, theological field educators, spiritual directors, and pastoral theologians are flourishing. Members of our community have adopted personal and corporate practices to ground themselves and engage their work with patience, creativity, and passion. Some, thankfully, have found time to reflect on our shared ministry practices and contribute the thoughtful articles from which we hope you will draw inspiration, find helpful resources, and perhaps even experience flourishing in the months ahead.

We also want to express gratitude to Matt Bloom at the University of Notre Dame, whose work on well-being and flourishing inspired the theme of this volume, for offering to contribute the lead article.

Nancy Wood and Matthew Floding  
Co-Editors