

## **L'Arche USA Extended Leadership Meeting 2017**

### **Reflection Sheet: Sacred Experience**

#### **Text**

- Then the Lord said to Elijah, “Go, stand in front of me on the mountain. I, the Lord, will pass by you.” Then a very strong wind blew. The wind caused the mountains to break apart. It broke large rocks in front of the Lord. But that wind was not the Lord. After that wind, there was an earthquake. But that earthquake was not the Lord. After the earthquake, there was a fire. But that fire was not the Lord. After the fire, there was a quiet, gentle voice.

When Elijah heard the voice, he used his coat to cover his face and went to the entrance to the cave and stood there. Then a voice said to him, “Elijah, why are you here?” *1 Kings 19: 11-13*

- Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery it is. In the boredom and pain of it, no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it, because in the last analysis all moments are key moments, and life itself is grace. *F Buechner, Now and Then*
- Much of the time we are transfixed by all the ways we can reflect ourselves out into the world and barely find the time to reflect back deeply in on our own lives” *Ariel Garten*

#### **Image/Meditation**

I ask for the grace of clarity.

I imagine myself floating in a boat on a lake, peering into the water. As I watch, I recognize that the lake contains the moments, relationships and experiences of my life. Some of those moments come to the surface and appear with clarity to me, inviting me to consider their impact and importance.

#### **Reflection Questions**

1. What comes to your mind or heart today when as you take some time to look back over your life and call forth sacred experiences - moments where you have known truth, been moved to new insight, or experienced joy, heartache, compassion, vulnerability, beauty or meaning in an important way?
2. What about these experiences – as they were happening in the moment or now upon reflection – makes them significant?
3. How have those experiences moved your head, heart and spirit? How have they impacted your relationships with others and with God/the More?
4. What do you know about yourself and about the world because of these experiences?

## **L'Arche USA Extended Leadership Meeting 2017**

### **Reflection Sheet: Personal Mission**

#### **Text**

- You are the light that shines for the world to see. You are like a city built on a hill that cannot be hidden. People don't hide a lamp under a bowl. They put it on a lampstand. Then the light shines for everyone in the house. In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do and praise your God in heaven. *Matthew 5:14-16*
- Our deepest calling is to grow into our own authentic self-hood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we ought to be. As we do so, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks--we will also find our path of authentic service in the world. *Parker Palmer, Let Your Life Speak*
- Despite what you think you know, sometimes your plans may be interrupted. Because you were designed for a purpose. You are on a mission to achieve greatness. No matter what obstacles lie in your path, you will reach your destination. Remember God's grace is sufficient." *Amaka Imani Nkosazana*

#### **Image/Meditation**

I ask for the grace of generosity and joyfulness.

I imagine myself standing on top of a hill, looking out over a land about which I care deeply. I know I am called down the hill into the land below. The time on the hilltop is time for me to consider the grace, gifts and goodness I've received from my experiences and relationships – and then to name my offering. Where and how am I called to enter the landscape below?

#### **Reflection Questions**

- As I reflect on my sacred experiences, what have I come to know as my personal mission? Where and how am I called to offer my gifts, vulnerabilities and vision for the world?
- What part of my mission or my personal call finds its roots in relationships with others? In my relationship with God/the More?
- What has remained a part of my personal mission through time, place and relationships? What new calls have emerged? What new calls have come in response to needs in L'Arche or the world? What lies ahead?

**L'Arche USA Extended Leadership Meeting 2017**  
**Reflection Sheet: Gathering up and moving forward**

**Text**

- Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect. *Romans 12:2*
- L'Arche USA has the potential to communicate a powerful message of love and acceptance that can build bridges across the categories that divide and exclude, including religious ones. In living in the tension between spirituality for the community and spirituality for the world, L'Arche can generate real wisdom for individual and societal transformation. *Spirituality White Paper*
- Imagine all the people sharing all the world. You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us and the world will be as one. *John Lennon*

**Image/Meditation**

I ask for the grace of renewal, growth, and possibilities

I imagine sitting before a basket that contains bits and pieces of the past week: I shuffle through it to see what has stayed with me: my own sacred experience, my personal mission, a particular relationship, the collectively named L'Arche gifts within and beyond itself, L'Arche's limits and new horizons. I consider the journey from personal story to a common shared L'Arche identity.

**Reflection Questions**

- What have I learned? About myself? About my community? About L'Arche in the US? About L'Arche in the world?
- Am I called to change in some way? What are the implications of that call?
- What am I called to do when I get back to my community/role? What are the implications for my community?
- Do I have unanswered questions/concerns within me?
- What will I take home with me that will influence how I am in community/my role?

# L'Arche USA ELT Meeting 2017 - Faith Sharing

## Tuesday, March 21st

### **It is Relational**

The deepest spiritual impact in community life is not the sectarian (usually Christian) element in spiritual practices, but the spiritual growth nurtured in the daily interactions and relational moments in homes and programs.

Transformation does not mean becoming someone else, but becoming one's best self in relation to the deeply valued other.

*from Spirituality White Paper*

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but engaging one another, all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

*Heb. 10:24-25*

## Wednesday, March 22st

### **It is a challenge**

L'Arche spirituality disrupts notions of correct theology or proper practice with the reality of the face and heart of the other who is both vulnerable and infinitely beautiful. Whether its members are Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, or no religion at all, L'Arche is inherently challenging to any matrix of belief it encounters.

*from Spirituality White Paper*

I offer you peace. I offer you love. I offer you friendship. I see your beauty. I hear your need. I feel your feelings. My wisdom flows from the Highest Source. I salute that Source in you. Let us work together for unity and love.

*Mohatma Gandhi*

## Thursday, March 23rd

### **It is human**

Jean Vanier's hope for a "human future" reflects the unique gift of L'Arche spirituality.

The humanness of L'Arche is always consciously connected to the spiritual dimension and to God as the ultimate source of love, in whatever way that is conceived. The human heart and the spiritual heart of L'Arche are inseparable.

*from Spirituality White Paper*

### ***A Voice from I don't know where***

It seems you love this world very much.

"Yes," I said. "This beautiful world."

And you don't mind the mind, that keeps you busy all the time with its dark and bright wonderings/

"No, I'm quite used to it. Busy, busy, all the time."

And you don't mind living with those questions, I mean the hard ones, that no one can answer?

"Actually, they're the most interesting."

And you have a person in your life whose hand you like to hold?

"Yes, I do."

It must surely, then be very happy down there in your heart.

"Yes," I said. "It is."

*from Felicity by Mary Oliver*



**L'Arche USA**  
**Guidelines for Spiritual Reflection Small Group Sharing**

To be read aloud before first group sharing:

*Guidelines for engaging:*

- 1) Have an attitude of respectful and grateful listening, and hold what is shared in confidence.
- 2) Use "I" messages. Speak from personal experience.
- 3) Each person is the expert concerning his or her own experience.
- 4) Each one will speak in turn. No one is obliged to share more than he or she wishes.
- 5) Speak briefly and clearly. Consider ahead what you will share.
- 6) It is important to have a timekeeper for the group, who can track when you hit each quarter hour.

*There will be three rounds of sharing:*

1) The first round is a time of sharing, speaking in turn of the fruit of our personal reflection. Each person speaks without interruption. There is no discussion in the first round. It is useful to have a candle, or other object, in the middle of the group. When participants wish to speak, they take the candle. When they finish, they return the candle to the center of the group. You may decide to establish that you only speak when holding the candle.

2) The second round is a time to speak about what you have heard during the first round. You do not have to speak in turn. Those who want to speak take the candle (if that has been established). In order to prepare for the second round, it is good to take a moment of silence after the first round to reflect on what was shared during the first round. Some questions may help the reflection:

- What did I hear? How was I moved by what was shared?
- What touched me particularly in what others have shared?
- What new perception or comprehension have I gained from what others had said?

3) The third round is a time for open discussion, a chance to ask questions, to ask for clarification. Members of the group should feel free to interact with one another, sharing what they believe were the important things that were said in the group.