



## **Deep Gladness, Deep Hunger: Discovering Your Call Through Theological Reflection**

by The Rev. Canon Andrew Arakawa

*“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” – Frederick Buechner*

We just finished an Insight Space cohort on June 28. The group met one Saturday a month for four months as part of a discernment process toward lay or ordained leadership formation in our Diocese. One of the aims of the gatherings is for participants (usually 6-9 discerners) to develop a habit of theological reflection - the process by which we reflect on our life experiences in light of our faith and theological tradition. Its purpose is to connect our everyday events and challenges with the wisdom found in Scripture, tradition, and reason, as we seek a deeper understanding of how God is working in and through our lives and moving us toward our vocations.

There are many forms of theological reflection to use. The primary method used with our last few Insight Space cohorts is a guided theological visioning, namely a modified Lectio Divina, which is a contemplative practice of scriptural reading, meditation, and prayer designed to foster deeper communion with God and increase understanding of God’s word. The Lectio Divina, as a theological reflection practice, fosters what Kathleen Cahalan, a practical theologian, calls phronesis, or practical wisdom, an essential component in our formation as lifelong learners, delving deeper into our discipleship as followers of Christ. She writes that phronesis is “a distinctive integrative knowing, taking into account multiple sources of information and combining them in ways that render insight into action, information into judgement.”

I am sharing with you here the structure of the modified Lectio Divina that we use during our Insight Space sessions.

- Lectio Divina – This form is designed for group use and can be adapted for individual use.
  - Choose a Scriptural passage. I usually choose one from our lectionary.
  - Ask for three volunteers to read the Scriptural passage.
  - Invite the group into prayer with a few moments of silence.
  - We listen to God’s Word for the first time – read the passage. We listen for a word or phrase that God will speak to us today.

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<sup>1</sup> Buechner, Frederick. *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker’s ABC*. Revised and expanded edition. (San Francisco: HarperOne, 1993), 95.

<sup>1</sup> Kathleen A. Cahalan, “Integrative Knowing and Practical Wisdom,” in *Integrating Work in Theological Education*, ed. Kathleen A. Cahalan, Edward Foley, and Gordon Mikoski (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2017), 205

- We reflect in silence for about one minute.
- We share aloud the word or phrase that spoke to our heart.
- We listen to God's Word for the second time – read the passage a second time.
- We reflect in silence on what God may be saying to us through the word or phrase that spoke to our heart for about one minute.
- We share aloud what this word or phrase means to us.
- We listen to God's Word for the third time – read the passage a third time.
- We reflect in silence on how God may be calling us to act through the word or phrase that spoke to our heart for about one minute.
- We share aloud how we feel God may be calling us to action.
- We thank God in prayer.

Many Insight Space participants let me know that Lectio Divina has been a rich and meaningful practice in their lives. **I invite you to take on this Lectio Divina practice as an individual, as a community, or both.**

We all have gifts to share. Theological reflection practices can help us understand our gifts and how to utilize them to serve the world's needs. If you are interested in being part of a future Insight Space cohort, please begin discussing with your priest the possibility of discerning a call to serve in a ministry within the Church, and keep an eye out for announcements regarding when the next cohort will gather.

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*Growing in Grace – Formation Perspectives* seeks to cultivate a community of lifelong learners as disciples of Christ within our diocese. The articles will offer resources, share formation stories, and give updates on the Waiolaihui‘ia Center for Ministry. Please reach out if you have story ideas or resources that can add to this ongoing conversation.  
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