

“A Daily Cup”

August 31, 2021

I've been an idealist since birth. It's probably why I loved fairy tales and Broadway musicals from the 40's, 50's, and 60's as a kid, and why I love being involved in communities where — at least ideally — every voice matters and our God given gifts and talents are cooperatively used to create outcomes that truly reflects the group. Sadly, in real life this experience can be rarer and harder to find than one would wish.

As part of the Discernment Committee, I experienced a delightful example of diverse individuals coming together, getting to know each other, and working together toward unity and a common goal.

Richard Rohr, an author and Franciscan friar and priest, has written that unity is not uniformity or conformity. Unity, in fact, is the reconciliation of differences. Differences are not something to be eradicated, they are to be cherished, but in order to achieve unity and consensus the individuals must be willing to listen, to really listen, in order to seek common ground that respects all the points of view.

That's exactly what we did on the Discernment Committee. I give full credit to our co-leaders Lisa and Phil. From the starting gate of this year-long process they invited us to share our thoughts and opinions. Gradually, as we developed trust in one another, we were able to become more frank, to disagree sometimes, and to discuss some elephants in the room regarding the pandemic and its effects on ourselves and church. The final decision of choosing our next leader was made easier because we had devoted considerable time listening to each other, challenging our own points of view, and then reaching a consensus. The process sometimes got messy but it paved the way for a great outcome, the best kind of fairy tale!

Peggy Williams

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