

Reflection 1: Tuesday, September 29 | 12:00 PM

[Video Reflection 1](#)

Opening Prayer: Prayer for Discernment, of Thomas A Kempis (read from *Dawn To Dark: A Book of Christian Prayer*, by R. Douglas Jones)

Grant to us, O Lord, to know that which is worth knowing, to love that which is worth loving, to praise that which pleases you most, to esteem that which is most precious to you, and to dislike whatsoever is evil in your eyes. Grant us with true judgement to distinguish things that differ, and above all to search out and to do what is well pleasing to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Read Exodus 3:1-15, slowly and attentively, using all your senses, finding yourself in the story

- The task of preaching during a time of crisis demands our attention and our discernment. So we must ask, where God might be speaking to us in the midst of our ordinary lives? Are we paying attention? Are we discerning what is holy in the midst of the ordinary? What is calling your attention? What is drawing you into the presence of God? Where are you hearing God's name proclaimed and God's character revealed?
- When we are called to preach in the midst of crisis, we can be beset by all kinds of doubts, hesitations, protestations. So we must ask, are we listening to the call of God-- or to our own fears? Are we listening to our friends and partners, those who encourage and support us-- or are we listening to the naysayers and doubters and all their put-downs? Are we listening to God's story of everlasting covenant-faithfulness? Or to all the other stories that we tell ourselves or that we hear from the Empire?
- Sometimes in a crisis we can find ourselves far away, cushioned from hearing the cries of the suffering. But God hears-- and calls us to hear as well. Our prayer in these times of crisis is that God would extend our listening, that we may we hear what God hears. Are we listening to the God who hears?

Closing Prayer: For Guidance (Occasional Prayer 58, [Book of Common Prayer](#))

O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light riseth up in darkness for the godly: Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what thou wouldest have us to do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in thy light we may see light, and in thy straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Listening / Waiting / Speaking Guided Reflections

by Rev. Alicia McClintic

PREACHING
THROUGH
CRISIS

A VIRTUAL RETREAT

Reflection 2: Tuesday, September 29 | 3:30 PM

[Video Reflection 2](#)

Opening Prayer: The Din Undoes Us, by Walter Brueggemann (read from *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth*)

Our lives are occupied territory...
Occupied by a cacophony of voices,
And the din undoes us.
In the daytime we have no time to listen,
Beset as we are by anxiety and goals and assignments and work.
And in the night the voices are so confusing
we can hardly sort out what could possibly be your voice
from the voice of our mothers and fathers
And our best friends and our pet projects,
because they all sound so much like you.
We are people over whom that word shema has been written.
We are listeners, but we do not listen well.
So we bid you, by the time the sun goes down today
Or by the time the sun comes up tomorrow, by night or by day,
that you will speak in ways that we can hear out beyond ourselves.
It is your speech to us that carries us to where we have never been,
and it is your speech to us that is our only hope.
So give us ears. Amen

Read 1 Kings 19, slowly and attentively, using all your senses, finding yourself in the story

- Sometimes when we're called to preach in times of crisis, "the journey is too much for us" and we are afraid. Sometimes we are exhausted after being "zealous for the LORD" seems to have shown no fruit. In these moments, we must ask ourselves if we need to take time for lamenting or fasting, rest or retreat. Are we carving out space for our own nourishment, to restore our strength? Are we waiting for the still small voice of God? Could we even hear it if it came to us?
- God is on the move, even when it seems like all our efforts have come to nothing and we're at the very end of the line. God is making a way, and sometimes in the midst of crisis, we can forget that. How can we remember the faithfulness of God when we are exhausted by the work God has called us to do? When we are exhausted and ready to give up, what calls us back into the ministry? What support systems (like Elisha and Jehu) are surrounding us, and how might we nurture them?

Closing Prayer: For Quiet Confidence (Occasional Prayer 59, [Book of Common Prayer](#))

O God of peace, who hast taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be our strength: By the might of thy Spirit lift us, we pray thee, to thy presence, where we may be still and know that thou art God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Reflection 3: Wednesday, September 30 | 12:00 PM

[Video Reflection 3](#)

Opening Prayer: For Courage (from Pádraig Ó Tuama, leader of the Corrymeela Community)

Courage comes from the heart
and we are always welcomed by God,
the Croí [heart] of all being.
We bear witness to our faith,
knowing that we are called to live lives of courage,
love and reconciliation in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of each day.
We bear witness, too, to our failures
and our complicity in the fractures of our world.
May we be courageous today.
May we learn today.
May we love today.
Amen.

Read Isaiah 6:1-13, slowly and attentively, using all your senses, finding yourself in the story

- “In the year King Uzziah died” signals a change in national leadership-- which always seems to be a time of crisis. How are we called to preach the good news this fall, during our own time of crisis in a turbulent election season?
- Though we are all people with unclean lips, God is calling us to speak boldly-- to proclaim God's reign of light and love and peace and justice. Like Isaiah, we too feel the burden of speaking good news though we are people of unclean lips. As we prepare to preach to our people week after week (especially in times of crisis), we remember that we encounter the presence of God so that we can proclaim the words of God. How are we keeping ourselves in a posture of worship before the Lord? How are we embodying the way of Jesus? How are we keeping in step with the Spirit?
- “Instructions for living a life: Pay attention / Be astonished / Tell about it.” - Mary Oliver. Like the poet Mary Oliver says, it seems like the work of the preacher is to pay attention, to experience awe in the presence of God, and to bear witness to who God is and what God is doing.
- As we cultivate our own courage to speak up, we also have to ask ourselves how we might platform the voices of others who don't have the same opportunities as we do. Who in our congregations and circles of influence might be saying “Here I am, send me!” like Isaiah? How can we move back so that others may move up to speak?

Closing Prayer: A Prayer of Self-Dedication (Occasional Prayer 61, [Book of Common Prayer](#))

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to thee, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly thine, utterly dedicated unto thee; and then use us, we pray thee, as thou wilt, and always to thy glory and the welfare of thy people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

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