



Clergy Webinar, June 30, 2020

Bishop Goff opened the call by reading the following poem:

“For The Interim Time”

By John O’Donohue

When near the end of day, life has drained
Out of light, and it is too soon
For the mind of night to have darkened things,

No place looks like itself, loss of outline
Makes everything look strangely in-between,
Unsure of what has been, or what might come.

In this wan light, even trees seem groundless.
In a while it will be night, but nothing
Here seems to believe the relief of darkness.

You are in this time of the interim
Where everything seems withheld.

The path you took to get here has washed out;
The way forward is still concealed from you.

“The old is not old enough to have died away;
The new is still too young to be born.”

You cannot lay claim to anything;
In this place of dusk,
Your eyes are blurred;
And there is no mirror.

Everyone else has lost sight of your heart
And you can see nowhere to put your trust;
You know you have to make your own way through.

As far as you can, hold your confidence.
Do not allow confusion to squander
This call which is loosening
Your roots in false ground,
That you might come free
From all you have outgrown.

What is being transfigured here in your mind,
And it is difficult and slow to become new.
The more faithfully you can endure here,
The more refined your heart will become
For your arrival in the new dawn.

From: "To Bless the Space Between Us" by John O'Donohue. Pub in 2008 by Doubleday.

Studies/Research on COVID Transmission via Singing/Playing Instruments in Church

Canon Mary Thorpe described a new study commissioned by a variety of groups involved in church music, designed to give us focused data on transmissibility of the COVID-19 virus by singing and by certain musical instruments. This is what was shared by Dr. Marty Wheeler, Professor of Church Music at VTS, regarding the study: <https://www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/>

Over 100 music organizations, including Association of Anglican Musicians, have joined forces to sponsor research on aerosol transmission of COVID-19 by instrumentalists, singers, and actors. Studies are underway at University of Colorado Boulder and University of Maryland. The schedule for posting results is:

- Preliminary results for woodwinds/brass by July 10
- Preliminary results for singers by July 25
- Evidence-based guidance available shortly thereafter
- Full results this fall

Relevant Articles:

Click on "Studies on Aerosol" folder for a collection of articles.

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1PZ8RF3EytzUWGwfJNpu4fsyXc4E_u2Yi

Canon Thorpe also noted the increase of new cases and deaths in some of the health districts, but pointed out that parishes may go ahead and submit their plans for Phase II Regathering even if those thresholds have not yet been met. In such cases, presuming approval of what is proposed, the parish will be given conditional approval, which can be implemented once those thresholds have been met.

Following Canon Thorpe's report, Bishop Goff addressed the challenges of self-care and of ministry in this time of struggle for racial justice. Her full remarks are [here](#).

Clergy Q&A re Self-Care

Is there anything we can do for clergy parents of young school-aged children (or younger) who cannot be left alone (the kids not the parents :)) during the day and whose spouse/partner also works full time and school will likely not be in session full time during the week? How do we make a choice between raising our kids and doing our ministry 30 (I'm 3/4 time) or 40 hour plus a week? We will likely be able to pay for someone to come in and watch the kids one day a week. But maybe at a minimum, some words of support from Diocese that we can use in talking with our vestries (or supervisors/colleagues). I have a supportive congregation but also feel guilt when I cannot put in a regular week of normal hours. **Yes.**

We'll put out something to lay leaders on this topic.

What support is the clergy offering to its POCs at this time? **What support would be most helpful? What do you feel you need? Let us know so we can walk together with you.**

Clergy Q&A re: Outdoor Worship and Regathering

A parishioner is considering a funeral service elsewhere, to circumvent our current restrictions (then hold burial service in our cemetery). May I officiate at a different location, with distancing measures taken? **Yes.**

Is there any more recent guidance about baptism. Church of the Redeemer is expecting a new member in July, and the parents really wish to have the child baptized in the congregation as soon as possible after the birth. They are willing to have an outdoor baptism. Would it possibly facilitate such an event to have water brought from home and blessed at the church, with the parents pouring the water, and the priest simply saying the words? **Contact Bishop Goff, but we expect to have further guidance available in a reasonably short time.**

Not a question but a request. As we can see even in this Q&A, we have the authority from the diocese to gather outdoors, max. 50 people. With all the "thou shalt nots" required to stay healthy people still want to meet indoors or outdoors. The challenge is the complexity for us to keep everyone safe, including oneself. I wish that the bishop's office would institute similar limitations for outdoor worship as we have for indoors. I wish we had the directive from the bishop's office to limit, or refrain from, outdoor worship. I've witnessed how people relax standards for care of others -its human nature: talking closer than 6', more than 10 people gathered in a tight circle, children not keeping safe distancing - they are children and miss their church family and aren't keeping precautions, etc. In short, limit outdoors services to a similar fast as indoor worship. **We have heard from others as well how difficult it is to maintain distancing in an outdoor setting. Our hope was that the outdoor option would provide a safe middle ground between regathering in an enclosed space and doing only online worship, but it is your call as the ordained leader of the parish as to whether or not it can be done safely.**

If churches hold outdoor services, can people use the bathrooms in the church building? **It can be done with careful sanitation after each use. You may need a "bathroom usher" to facilitate that.**

So masks outdoors are necessary even when socially distanced and the Governor's regulations don't require it? **Yes.**

Are we allowed to let people to come into the church to pray? People come to drop things off at the church and request to go into the church and pray. **If you are allowing people to go into the church to pray, you are going to need to monitor them to see, if there is more than one person at a time, if they are maintaining social distancing norms. If more than one person is present, they will need to wear masks. Places which they have touched will need to be wiped down. Who will do this? Some parishes have attempted to offer this by providing "monitors," but keeping a pool of volunteer monitors in place when the utilization of the space will be sporadic may be an unrealistic expectation. We would love to see a protocol that makes sense, is protective, and is able to be adhered to for the long haul. If you have some ideas about this, please convey them to Canon Mary Thorpe mthorpe@thediocese.net.**

Regarding worship - bathrooms are supposed to be sanitized according to the outdoor guidelines, but there is not a mention of this in regards to “regular” worship. The outdoor guidelines say each bathroom needs to be cleaned after each use but that isn’t listed in the general category – I’m just looking for clarification. Good point! **It would fall under the general category of sanitation and disinfection in the Phased Regathering guidelines, which don’t go into the same level of detail as what is laid out in the outdoor worship guidelines. If you have a reasonable plan to keep people safe when they use the bathrooms – no cluster of persons in the women’s room, for example, if you have a multiple-stall women’s room, telling people to wipe down the toilet and the vanity after use – that should suffice for the Phased Regathering plan.**

Do you have a reference for the study into singing and musical instrument use that Mary spoke about?

This is what was shared by Dr. Marty Wheeler, Professor of Church Music at VTS, regarding the study: <https://www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/>

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Clergy Q&A re: Ministry in Times of Racial Struggle

I don't have a question at the moment, but I want to express my gratitude for the explicit support of the clergy by our bishops as we engage this work. It's going to take a very long time.

What are best practices for engaging the whole church in discussions about how better to live into our lives together learning how to be anti-racist? **Let’s see what your colleagues are using.**

Questions about the Diocese itself

Any plans to address diversity at Mayo house? **Yes. We are aware of it, and in our experience it’s tricky. On the rare occasions when we have had openings, despite broadly advertising open positions, we were usually not blessed with a number of candidates of color. We are exploring that within ourselves. We would also note that when we actively recruit candidates of color for positions at Mayo House and elsewhere within our Diocese, many say that they are unwilling to come to Richmond out of fear for**

themselves and their families. We honor their concerns and we also honor your challenge to us to do better. You might also be interested to know that the leadership team (Bishops, Chief of Staff, Canon to the Ordinary, Treasurer) have all been taking online anti-racism training as part of their own commitment to doing this work, and doing it well.

Virginia feels like a high risk environment for priests of color. We want to support you; we do not want to assume that we know what you need. Please do let the Bishops know how best we can help mitigate the risks in real and helpful ways.

As a person of color, I took the chance to come to this diocese and I wondered if racial diversity was a diocesan priority. Eight years later, I'm still wondering. Support, longer term, is human resources. The diocesan staff reflects no racial diversity in its senior management: bishops, treasurer, canon to the ordinary, chief of staff, etc. Despite the challenges, we need to start somewhere! We agree, and you can help by encouraging persons of color to apply when we have openings. In fact, invite candidates of color to consider whether they are called when we seek nominations for the next Bishop Diocesan election (that election process will be called for at Convention in November.) We also want to remind everyone that other diocesan leadership bodies, ones that are generally populated by lay people, seek new members annually, and we would love to see candidates of color be nominated or self-nominate for these positions. For these positions, check in with Bill Martin to see where the openings will be at bmartin@thediocese.net. As a side note, the Office of Transition Ministry is integrating anti-bias and anti-racism training into its work with vestries and search committees. The Commission on Ministry is doing similar work. Deeply engaged in the work of encouraging candidates of color, they are also engaged in the work of defining the formation of antiracist priests. We are cognizant of the many ways we have not addressed these issues in the past and are actively working toward change.

Anti-Racism RESOURCES

I'm not familiar with Sacred Ground. Can anyone provide more info?

<https://episcopalchurch.org/sacred-ground> See discussion below.

Perhaps a webinar with those clergy who have done Sacred Ground? Much like was offered on technical issues weeks ago. We'll consider that great idea; in the meantime, you might want to connect with those listed below who have done it.

We're planning to use Sacred Ground this fall. I'd like to talk with the clergy person who offered to talk about it. Was that Marilu Thomas? Yes. Marilu Thomas, mariluatchurch@gmail.com, 434-327-2464.

I've facilitated Sacred Ground in my parish as well, I'm happy to talk with anyone about the experience. amoore@standrewsoregonhill.org

Others have done Sacred Ground: The Rev. Andrew Moore, The Rev. Kim Coleman, and The Rev. Kim Reinholz. I can put you in touch with them. Email me at ahuertas@thediocese.net

We at Grace in Alexandria are using "The New Jim Crow," by Amy Cooper, with an eye to the recent events.

Can we set up "listening" sessions throughout the Diocese for us white folks to hear how we can actively move to a new place where we are ONE in Christ? *If what you're suggesting is sessions where white persons can be taught by persons of color, we'd suggest there is a better starting point. Rather than expecting persons of color to do the work yet again, it would be more productive to begin with learning as white persons the whole grievous history of racism and systems built on preserving white privilege to the detriment of those who were and continue to be victims of those systems. There are many books and training curriculum listed here that are a starting point, but there is no reason why you couldn't reach out to other white persons, ordained or otherwise, to have a discussion about what you are learning and how you see ways that things might change.*

I do not know how to make the reading group happen, but I guess the first step is for those who want to participate suggest the best book to begin with. You can email Rosemary Beales, remembrance49@gmail.com

Thanks to Aisha Huertas for coordinating the Civil Discourse course "Make Me an Instrument." It is still available free of charge and could be used as a way help establish a context for discussing difficult issues. Other courses are available through ChurchNext.

I was given an article by Tre Johnson: "When black people are in pain, white people just join book clubs." What do you think about this? *We are told that in this season that our brothers and sisters of color want us as white people to do our own work first, rather than expecting them to explain once again how we exercise our white privilege in white supremacist contexts. So book clubs are a start, but they are not the whole of the work. The starting point is self-education and examination of conscience; the ongoing work is then allying and advocating in ways that are not about protecting one's own position but about following the Gospel.*

In my ministerial context, I am finding that using the words "Resources on Race" invites greater engagement than "Anti-Racism Resources." I have two sets of resources which I have assembled in the past three weeks: one is a bibliography of books for adults and children/youth; the other is articles, videos, podcasts, and films. Of course this list changes hourly. Happy to share. We looked at sacred ground but it looked super involved for right now - we have done four of five weeks in a book/study conversation - gve five suggestions of books and we are all reading different ones - and folks like hearing from the other books. We used White Fragility, How to be an Anti-racist and I'm Still Here. Personally, I thought the latter was excellent. Haven't started the other two yet. leedschurchpic@gmail.com

Note to the recent Q&A: "Race" and "Racism" are not the same thing. I have been leading conversations for those wanting to engage with Ibram X Kendi's "How to be an Antiracist." If any clergy would like to read and form a group to engage that work, please email me at PriestSP@stmarksrv.org. (Sarah Kye Price)

This is Kim Reinholz. I just attended the OASIS conference for Young Adult and Campus Ministry and one of our plenary speakers was Lenny Duncan who is the author of Dear White Church... I haven't finished the book yet, but I recommend clergy to look into this in particular

We have a group meeting each week, "The Sin of Racism," using podcasts, videos and articles for discussion to lead to action. Willing to share if you'd like. spothpriest@gmail.com (Susan MacDonald)

Free Webinar Ibram X. Kendi on "How to Be an Antiracist"
<https://www.facebook.com/events/682977602280514/>

For books to read, I can recommend

1. The Little Book of Racial Reconciliation
2. White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo
3. Seeing My Skin by fellow Episcopal priest Peter Jarrett Schell - a white man married to a brilliant black woman who is also an Episcopal priest
4. Good White Racist?

Resources provide by the Bexley Anti-Racism Project have been posted to the Clergy of the Diocese Facebook page. For your consideration: <https://bexleyarp.org/>

There are resources available as well on the diocesan website [here](#).

EXPERIENCES IN OUR CONTEXTS

Here in our rural parish, we have reinitiated our relationship with a historically black church just two miles down the road. We have already engaged in two very productive conversations. Right now we at Leeds are in an active listening posture--to hear their stories, their truths, and their lived experiences. It's all very, very encouraging. (Kate Bryant, Leeds)

At our rural church we have been developing a relationship with a historically Black Baptist church just two miles away. We have visited each other's worship times. Since moving to online worship we have had times of praying the same prayers at the same time in our online worship times. We are looking forward to developing an even deeper relationship in the future. (John Maher, St Francis Goochland)

Clergy Q&A re Other Matters

Is CIGNA the group that we have EAP with? **EAP is CIGNA. Regular behavioral health is through the Blue Cross Blue Shield Anthem.**

Link to EAP overview:

<https://www.cpg.org/globalassets/documents/publications/health-employee-assistance-program-eap.pdf>

Do you have a list of spiritual directors who will work virtually? **We will gather some options for you.**

I am officiating an interment of ashes in a columbarium at Arlington National Cemetery in late July for family friends. What is the number of people that may be present? **Follow whatever guidelines the Chaplain's Office at Arlington gives you and wear a mask.**

Re: parish budgeting (and other things)--is there discussion regarding a virtual convention? **Yes, it is being actively considered as we speak.**

A general comment:

I am a retired mariner and we often say, anyone can hold a course on a calm sea. It takes a mariner to hold course on a rough sea. I say this to the bishop and her diocesan staff, we are on rough seas and you are holding the course. Keep it true, and thank you.

Bishop Susan's closing remarks

Summer is here and we are moving to a twice a month webinar schedule until Labor Day. We will send out a Zoom invitation shortly. You may want to note the dates in your calendar: July 14, 28, August 11, 25. In between those calls, should something pressing arise, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or Mark Eastham. If there is something that happens that affects us all, we always have the option to call a meeting in between the scheduled dates. Thank you for your strong work in this time.

Bishop Jennifer Brooke-Davidson closed the meeting with reflection and prayer.