

SECTION 6  
PRAYERS, POEMS, REFLECTIONS  
AND LITANIES FROM A  
TIME OF CRISIS



*Editors' Introduction*

**R**eflective Practice is normally graced with poems and even visual artwork that elevate a theme or in some other way speaks to reflection and formation. For Volume 41 it seemed good to us to reserve a special section of the Journal for capturing the zeitgeist of 2020.

On March 6, as the pandemic began to disrupt daily life in the U.S. and Canada, Anne and Jeffery Rowthorn, resident scholars at the Colledgeville Institute at St. John's University wrote a "Litany for the Corona Virus." Their litany aided churches in their prayers and helped worshipers recognize the scope of the pandemic's impact.

Kate Bowler, author of *Everything Happens for a Reason: And Other Lies I've Loved*, and colleague Jessica Richie, consider the dysfunction and injustice disclosed in 2020 and invite readers to "a blessing for when you're tired of broken systems."

Theological field education students gather weekly for peer reflection groups on their experiences in ministry. Many groups begin with a centering exercise. This practice became even more important given the stress, grief, and anxiety students were bearing during the abrupt shift to virtual spaces and loss of human connection. Divinity student J.D. Gierach composed "A Prayer For An Anxious Mind" for use as a centering exercise for his reflection group.

Throughout America Black Lives Matter protests and engagement with political and justice department leaders have continued during the pandemic. Deonte Moses, another divinity student, reflects on his experi-

ence participating self-consciously as a ministerial leader in "When Will It End?"

Gender injustice has been underscored by the Me Too movement, painfully disclosed in pay inequity, and is deeply troubling as an ongoing challenge for the church. Grace Ji-Sun Kim, professor at Earlham School of Religion, acknowledges these in her hopeful prayer "For Courage While Confronting Gender Injustice."

"I make peace by making  
a cup of tea for my story and yours."

Ibtisam Barakat captures the spirit of hospitality in her achingly beautiful poem "Tea Invitation."

During the pandemic, frontline healthcare workers have often been featured in the news, sometimes portrayed as heroes. CPE Educators know what it means to potentially walk into harm's way when going to work. E.B. Lucky reflects on his experience as a nurse who enters this space each day.

As the pandemic dragged on over 2020, mental health care professionals documented the dramatic increase in numbers of persons struggling with anxiety and depression. Rev. M Barclay, in the tradition of lament and confession, allows readers to give voice to their feelings in "A prayer for days when there is only sadness."

This was an election year. Feelings ran high. During the Presidential debate on September 29, 2020, one phrase caught Nolan Gusdal's attention. He confronted its message in his poem, "STAND DOWN & STAND BY."

Volume 41 is released in 2021. In the spirit of reflection, of healing, and of hope we offers these prayers, poems, reflections, and a litany.

Matthew Floding and Nancy Wood  
Editors