

PASTORAL ISSUES

Module Eight



Episcopal Diocese of Florida

Deacon School

June 2020

Opening Reflection

You wonder whether it is good to share your struggle with others, especially with those to whom you minister. You find it hard not to mention your pains and sorrows to those you are trying to help. You feel that what belongs to the core of your humanity should not be hidden. You want to be a fellow traveler, not a distant guide.

The main question is “Do you own your pain?” As long as you do not own your pain – that is, integrate your pain into your way of being in the world – the danger exists that you will use the other to seek healing for yourself. When you speak to others about your pain without fully owning it, you expect something from them that they cannot give. As a result, you will feel frustrated, and those you wanted to help will feel confused, disappointed, or even further burdened.

But when you fully own your pain and do not expect those to whom you minister to alleviate it, you can speak about it in true freedom. Then sharing your struggle can become a service; then your openness about yourself can offer courage and hope to others.

For you to be able to share your struggle as a service, it is also essential to have people to whom you can go with your own needs. You will always need safe people to whom you can pour out your heart. You will always need people who do not need you but who can receive you and give you back to yourself. You will always need people who can help you own your pain and claim your struggle.

The core question in your ministry is “Is my sharing of my struggle in the service of the one who seeks my help?” This question can only be answered yes when you truly own your pain and expect nothing from those who seek your ministry.

(Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer*, p 72-73)

Objectives

After completing this module, the Postulant will be able to:

- ✓ Utilize tools for effective listening;
- ✓ Have basic awareness of developmental stages;
- ✓ Recognize signs of grief and loss in self and others;
- ✓ Identify areas of embeddedness that might affect one’s ability to care for individuals with different backgrounds or life experience; and
- ✓ Articulate the central themes and core values of one’s religious/spiritual heritage and the theological underpinnings that inform one’s pastoral ministry.



Required Reading

Doehring, Carrie, *The Practice of Pastoral Care*, Revised and Expanded Edition. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015.

The Practice of Pastoral Care has become a popular seminary textbook for courses in pastoral care and a manual for clinical pastoral education. In it Doehring encourages counselors to view their ministry through a trifocal lens that incorporates pre-modern, modern, and postmodern approaches to religious and psychological knowledge. Doehring describes the basic ingredients of a caregiving relationship, shows how to use the caregiver’s life experience as a source of authority, and demonstrates how to develop the skill of listening and establishing the actual relationship. This new edition elaborates on and expands the author’s previous work, adding an intercultural perspective that gives more

attention to religious pluralism in the pastoral care setting. It offers a road map for using a step-by-step narrative, relational, embodied approach to spiritual care that respects the unique ways people live out their values and beliefs, especially in coping with stress, loss, and violence. Readers will be able to confidently and professionally offer pastoral care and counseling to members of their congregations or other places of ministry.

Dykstra, Robert C., *Images of Pastoral care: Classic Readings*. Danvers, MA: Chalice Press, 2005

This is an edited volume of works in contemporary pastoral theology that has predominated over the past several decades. Through the writings of nineteen leading voices in the history of pastoral care, Dykstra shows how each contributor developed a metaphor for understanding pastoral care. Such metaphors include the solicitous shepherd, the wounded healer, the intimate stranger, the midwife, and other tangible images. Through these works, the reader gains a sense of the varied identities of pastoral care professionals, their struggles for recognition in this often-controversial field, and insight into the history of the disciple.

Wadell, Paul J., *Becoming Friends: Worship, Justice and the Practice of Christian Friendship*. Grand Rapids, MI, Brazos Press 2002.

How do Christians understand friendship and intimacy? How does worship form Christians into a community of the friends of God? What virtues does God call us to incorporate into our lives? In *Becoming Friends*, Paul Wadell explores the connections between worship, justice, friendship, and the life we are called to live. True Christian friendship summons us to love all of our neighbors. Wadell examines obstacles to and characteristics of true friendship and, drawing from the works of Augustine, Aelred of Rievaulx, and other Christian exemplars, contends that we are called to serve God through friendship and that this calling requires us to cultivate certain virtues--especially hope, justice, and forgiveness. *Becoming Friends* offers a provocative look into the nature and importance of true Christian friendship. Anyone looking to reflect on the indispensable role of good friendships in the Christian life will find this a hopeful and encouraging book.

Supplementary Resources

Awareness/Pastoral Formation

Blumenthal, *Facing the Abusing God*
Friedman, *Friedman's Fables*
Lerner, *The Dance of Anger*
Lerner, *The Dance of Fear*
Lerner, *The Dance of Intimacy*
Lerner, *The Dance of Connection*
Lester, *The Angry Christian*
Loomis, *The Self in Pilgrimage*
Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer*
Richardson, *Family Ties that Bind*
Wimberly, *Recalling Our Own Stories*
The Velveteen Rabbit and *The Velveteen Principles*

Pastoral Skills

Albom, *Tuesdays with Morrie*
Dossey, *Healing Words*
Fitchett, *Assessing Spiritual Needs: A guide for Caregivers*
Graham, *Care of Persons, Care of World*
Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*
Lewis, *A Grief Observed*
Mitchell and Anderson, *All our Losses, All our Grievs*
Savage, *Listening Skills for Ministry*

Behavioral Sciences

Beattie, *Co-Dependent No More*
Capps, *Life Cycle Theory and Pastoral Care*
Fowler, *Stages of Faith: the Psychology of Human Development*
Friedman, *Generation to Generation*
Friedman, *A Failure of Nerve*
Gilbert, *Extraordinary Relationships*
Jourard, *The Transparent Self*

Theology

Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*
Lester, *Hope in Pastoral Care and Counseling*
Loader, *Feminist Theology: A Reader*

Framework for Verbatim

Background for Verbatim

(Reason for call, previous visits made, etc.)

Setting (if applicable)

Observations:

People Present:

Non-Verbal Communication:

Personal Feelings Prior to Meeting:

Personal Feelings After the Meeting:

Writing the Verbatim

On separate sheets of paper write a presentation of a recent pastoral conversation or interaction. Choose an event that can be captured in 1 – 3 pages. The verbatim may be a full conversation or a portion of a lengthier conversation. Write significant portions of that conversation out, word for word, as clearly as you can remember it. Use parentheses () to describe the setting, any non-verbal communication and any feelings or inner thoughts of your own. Use only initials or abbreviations when referring to participants.

Abbreviations: (for example)

Your Initials – Postulant

P - Parishioner

F – Family member

D– Doctor

N – Nurse

Add appropriate abbreviations for your situation.

MODULE 8 ASSIGNMENTS
PRACTICAL TRAINING & EXPERIENCE

Mentor: The Rev. Canon Beth Tjoflat

- 1) Write a brief reflection on your current understanding of your personal theology of pastoral care. What do you feel called to in pastoral ministry? How has this calling manifested in your life? What has been important to you when you have been a recipient of pastoral care? What has been ineffective or even hurtful?
- 2) Write a brief reflection answering the following: How do you listen to yourself? How do you know what you need? Who is caring for you?
- 3) Write a verbatim (dialogue) of a recent pastoral conversation or interaction (using initials only). Choose an event that yields at least 1 page of dialogue but no more than 3 pages (you needn't include the full conversation, if it is extremely long). Where did you feel challenged? Where were you effective and how do you know? Of whom or what does the recipient of care in this situation remind you? Can you recognize the difference between their "stuff" and yours? With what would you like help from your peers?
- 4) Before the first session on Pastoral Issues, choose one or more of the "images" from Dykstra that speak to you and write a one page reflecting upon this.
- 5) Outline a class for laity involved in pastoral care ministries that will assist them to develop their own theology of pastoral care.
- 6) After the first pastoral care session but before the second session, develop your own personal image/metaphor for pastoral care. Do a creative project to reflect this image and be prepared to share it with the group. This may be a poem or essay; a photo, drawing or painting, a sculpture. The medium is your choice!
- 7) **SYNTHESIS** – Reread the Opening Reflection. In light of this module's readings and discussions, reflect on how and in what way(s) your understanding has deepened or broadened. How do you find this passage relevant to your ministry? To your life?

Module Eight Evaluation

Pastoral Issues

Postulant: _____

The mentor assess the Postulant's work on each assignment in the module. The mentor will document on this form, whether the assignment was completed satisfactorily. The mentor may add additional comments if desired. If the assignment is not completed satisfactorily, the mentor must add comments regarding the deficiencies. The mentor will review the evaluation with the Postulant and the Deacon School Co-facilitators.

	Assignment	Complete/Incomplete
1	Write a brief reflection on your current understanding of your personal theology of pastoral care. What do you feel called to in pastoral ministry? How has this calling manifested in your life? What has been important to you when you have been a recipient of pastoral care? What has been ineffective or even hurtful?	
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Signatures:

Mentor:

Date: _____

Postulant:

Date: _____