

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Tend to Your Inner Self

BY NATHAN

Almost seven years ago, while working at another job in another state, I became so overwhelmed with work and my personal life that multiple times a week, I found myself lying under my desk with noise cancelling headphones and crying.

It was as if all the emails, phone calls, projects, programs, to-do lists, and personal responsibilities became too much for me to handle and lying on that well worn carpet under my desk was all I could do to comfort myself.

This propelled me on a two-year journey where every three months I spent three days at a monastery outside of Chicago. I spent hours in silence and contemplation. There were moments of meditation, walks around a lake exploring nature in solitude, prompts for journaling or thinking, and space in a beautiful cathedral to quietly sit, pray, or find spiritual comfort.

And, on a few occasions, I might have tried to spy on the monks who lived down the hall from me.

However, it was an inward journey that radically altered my outward life. To be honest, it was one of the most transformation journeys of my life, and I could share countless stories with you about it.

This experience forced me to remember that being with others, myself, and the Divine was the catalyst for me to be able to do for others. I learned to be present to the One who is always present to me. It made clear to me that the best thing I can do for my own leadership and relationships is to tend to my inward self. It taught me that I am not a human doing, but a human being. Without finding time to simply rest and be, I cannot be fully myself. And, in the grand scheme of things, tending to my soul is one of my day's most important tasks.

When there is a storm outside, we retreat to the safety and security of being inside. So, too, must we return inward when our outside world is stressful, busy, or feels chaotic. In the last few



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For a list of regularly scheduled fellowship group meetings, go to the [Spiritual Life webpage](#) and click on "Spiritual Organizations on Campus." Helpful Links on LinkTree at - [SpiritualLifeCenter](#)

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weeks, I have heard stories from members of our community who are experiencing hurricane force storms in their lives. And yet, when they retreat inward, they have been able to find safety and solace.

An ancient Jewish scripture reminds us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, and in quietness and trust shall be our strength. Early Christian letters remind us not to be anxious about anything but to let the peace of the Divine guard our hearts and minds. The Buddhist Zen master, Thich Nhat Hahn, teaches us that, "The way out is in."

My encouragement to you is that no matter what circumstances are swirling around you this week, you take the time to go inward. The way out of the mess around you is to spend some time going in. Take that moment to become aware of your breathing, try meditating, go for a walk, sit outside, allow yourself some silence, stare at a tree for a minute (which is scientifically proven to lower your blood pressure by the way), or simply recite a prayer or mantra.

Tending to your soul is so important and that pressing item on your to-do list can wait a bit longer.

Sympathies, Concerns, and Congrats

Our sympathies are extended to:

- **Dr. Lee Ann Eagler** (DPT) on the death of her mother-in-law, Janet Eagler.
- **Heather Garnett** '05 M.Ed. (Alumni Programs) whose father, Larry Taylor Ayres, died on October 8, 2021. Sympathies also to Heather's daughters, **Rachel Garnett** (senior, Lynchburg, VA) and **Rebecca Garnett** (junior, Lynchburg, VA) on the death of their grandfather.
- **Gabbie McCabe** (junior, Lynchburg, VA), whose grandfather died.

If you were not able to attend the Snidow Lecture on September 20, you may view our [video recording](#). The lecture, entitled "You Are Not Alone: Faith, Crisis, and Mental Health," was given by Rev. David Finnegan-Hosey.

Dates to Remember

Sundays at 4:30 p.m.
Weekly ROMAN CATHOLIC MASS
Snidow Chapel

October 16
T-SHIRT BLANKET
SILENT AUCTION
12 noon until 4 p.m.
at the Homecoming Tailgate
[Link](#) to story featuring
Lunch Lady and Blanket Creator
Lori Elholm

Tuesday, October 26 at 7 p.m.
CAKE CHAT: CONVERSATION
WITH CHAPLAINS.
Topic "Death Cafe"
Schewel 231

The Chaplain's Corner is a newsletter published by the Spiritual Life Center (SLC) at the University of Lynchburg. We share campus concerns and updates, spiritual life events and activities, and words for the journey. If you have a joy or concern you'd like to share, reply to this message, email the SLC office - spirituallife@lynchburg.edu, or call 434.544.8348. We only share with your permission. Current and previous issues are on the SLC page of the University website - www.lynchburg.edu/spiritual-life.