

To make
ourselves
at home



Pathways
of
Grace

THE PROGRAM: *To make ourselves at home*

A three-session opportunity to reflect on the spiritual dynamics of "making ourselves at home in all circumstances," including in times of isolation and loneliness, division and polarization, illness and death.

DATES: September 10, 17, and 24, 2020

TIME: 1:00 pm Eastern; 12:00 pm Central; 11:00 am Mountain; and 10:00 am Pacific

EACH SESSION: Will last between 50 and 75 minutes.

PARTICIPANTS: The invitation is being extended to all parishes in which a Professed Member, novice, or associate of the Order of the Ascension is involved. A few other parishes have also been invited to participate.

REGISTER: No later than September 1, 2020. Email your name and email to michelleheyne@gmail.com.

FEE: There is no fee

ZOOM: We will gather from parishes across the country on **Zoom**.

ADVANCE WORK:

You'll be asked to read **two or three pages before each session** and to consider the issues and questions offered in the reading. The readings will be made available six days before each session.

EACH SESSION INCLUDES:

- **Prayer**
- An exercise in which you **consider the theme** (see more on the theme and focus below) in relation to your life
- **Small group sharing** (share only what you want to share)
- A presentation with conversation and **Q&A**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- 1) To **increase my understanding** of the spiritual dynamics
- 2) To **learn a few traditional methods** of the spiritual life
- 3) To **learn a broader spiritual map**

Background and Theme for the Sessions

On the Feast of the Ascension, members of the Order of the Ascension, a dispersed Benedictine community, gathered on Zoom for prayer and conversation. Our Presiding Sister, Michelle Heyne, OA offered a quote from Father Richard Benson, SSJE.

We must be as religious, cherishing a habit of at once jumping into our place and finding ourselves at home in it, just as much at home there is anywhere else. ... The religious life is not to be a dreamy dissatisfaction with the present state of things, it is not to be a mere not knowing what to do next, because things about us are as they are, but it is the consciousness of being able to make ourselves at home under all circumstances and able to turn everything that happens to account. This is what the religious should be — ready; ready but not fussy. Fr. Benson, Society of St. John the Evangelist.

Fr. Benson is of course correct that one of the tasks of those of us in the Religious Life is "to make ourselves at home in all circumstances." And to turn that to good account. It's also the task of every Christian.

The idea: The idea for this program emerged after about a month into the nation's (the world's) **efforts to cope with the pandemic**. We noticed an increase in people talking about feelings of loneliness and hostility. For some who lived alone there was an increase of anxiety and depression; for others it expressed itself in excessive drinking or suicidal thoughts. For people who lived with others there was too much togetherness. Both conditions set loose feelings of anger and resentment.

And the impact of the pandemic came on top of an already existing decline of close friendships and a growing increase of political polarization. Then came an economic recession and protests over policing and race.

We begin with hostility because it may be the easiest force to see. We all experience hostility. Hostility within ourselves. Sometimes expressed toward others. Hostility directed at us. In these times it may seem that the hostility is on the increase.

The theme: **The relationship among loneliness, solitude and hostility in my spiritual life.** How as Christians we can "make ourselves at home under all circumstances"--including in times of isolation and loneliness, division and polarization, illness and death.

EXPECTATIONS:

1) Participants need to access the session through a **Zoom** invitation that will be sent out at least one day prior to each session. You need to have both the **video and sound active**. We want to be able to see all the participants and have them see one another.

2) The meeting site will be open about 5 minutes before we begin. Please be on time. We will close the meeting at 5 minutes after the hour.

COFFEE & TEA: Made just as you like it, by you, at home

PROGRAM LEADERS: Michelle Heyne, OA & Robert Gallagher, OA. [About the leaders](#)

THE ORDER OF THE ASCENSION: Is a dispersed Benedictine community of the Episcopal Church, founded in 1983. [For more information](#)

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