Reflection on article –

“The Role of Meaning-Making in Transitional Times”

Seeking meaning is different than “strategic” planning. Evoking meaning is how the WHY of our existence is formed.

Ted Dunn when referring to what Frankl observed in prisoners in Auschwitz states, “Surrounded by suffering and death, these survivors focused intently upon their interior life.” Frankl also observed that in living in the present gives us opportunities for choices to make something positive.

“When status quo thinking, grieving, and letting go seem to eclipse the new,” Dunn encourages awakening to opportunities to discover meaning and purpose in the present reality by letting go of the past so as to give hope for the future.

Why meaning-making is important in times of transition –

* A Purpose for Letting Go - Making room for the new

Not just about aging and diminishment and a continual “downsizing” unto death. Letting go might be the deeper invitation.

“Mature surrender is an act of sacrificial love – a purposeful, proactive, and generative choice to surrender what exists in the present in order to make way for something new in the future.

Knowing who we are in a new way – not simply doing the same over again.

The “how” we do this is key – must contain a choice. We are ripe and ready to go.

Diane referred to an interview of Stephen Colbert (CBS “The Late Show”) by Anderson Cooper on CNN.

* He recalls the trauma of the death of his father and two older brothers in a plane crash when he was 10 years old
* Anderson questions him on his faith
* Stephen speaks of his understanding of suffering describing a gratitude for suffering for the opportunity to become “more human” (transformation)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YB46h1koicQ>

* A Pathway to Our Future

In transitional times, the path to the future is always ambiguous and we must create it by walking it.

* A Container, Context, and Catalyst for the Inner Work of Transformation

Our experience of meaning is upended in times of transition. We need to create a new narrative.

We don’t just want to try harder but rather try differently. Strategic planning focuses on external change, but the individual and communal call is to embrace the work of transformation.

It is a choice to not be driven by fear – but instead by love of mission, one another and an alluring God. An example of this is witnessing the faith and presence of the Sisters at Sound Beach – being with each other in kindness and love.

Everyday life brings us to a new level (though it may be a struggle), we can choose to be transformed and in turn become agents of transformation (p. 6). We can reframe trauma into blessedness. We are called to celebrate the best that we could be and know that is enough.

One of the roles of leadership is to help redefine our lives, by inviting members to explore the “deeper invitation” during times of transition and transformation.

Dunn concludes the article by calling us to:

*Listen to inner voices of your ancestors, recall times of transition in your own life through which you have successfully journeyed, embrace your images of hope, and allow these to be your touchstones to guide you in the unfolding of a new vision.*

Questions posed in the article that you may want to consider for further reflection:

* What meaning does all the suffering, letting go, and breaking down you are experiencing hold for you and your community?
* What are the stories you tell yourselves about your lives as a community that are no longer true or that no longer fit your emerging reality?
* What do you need to let go? What are the threads you need to hold onto?
* Who, with the Love of God’s grace, are you being called to become?

*To seek, contemplate and reveal Divine Wisdom.*