

ISMAPNG Staff Formation Bytes

Module 4: Embracing the Now

Resource Sheet

Introduction to the Module

Our focus for Module 4 is 'Embracing the Now'...

Covid19 forced the world to stop and in doing so, gave us the time to “stop and smell the roses.” Despite what was, and may still be happening around us, there were and are always blessings to be grateful for, if we chose to recognise them.

Not having a million things running through our head allows us to live in the present and to be present to ourselves and others. It gives us the time to reflect on who we are, what we were doing, and what is (or should be) important to us. It also gives us the opportunity to deepen the awareness of self and to walk a little further in our own journey of self-acceptance.

We were forced to adapt, we embraced new ways of interacting, and used the extra time on our hands to connect with others. As we start meeting family and friends in person, going back to our offices and engaging in activities we used to, pre-Covid19, what might we do differently as we go forward?

Resources used in this Module include a few short video clips, prayers and extracts from Catherine McAuley’s writings. We encourage you to engage with as many of the Bytes as your time allows.

Byte 1: Gratitude

Gratitude is being able to see the beauty in, and being thankful for little things of life regardless of what we have or do not have, or the situation we may be in.

Sr Joyce Rupp OSM is well known for her work as a writer, international retreat leader, and conference speaker. She is the author of numerous bestselling books, several of which are retreat guides. Read the prayer she wrote on gratitude at the end of this resource sheet.

- [What are some of the things you are grateful for?](#)
- [How do you show your gratitude?](#)

Byte 2: Being Present to Ourselves and Others

To be fully present means that you are engaged in the now: in mind, body and spirit. You are not thinking of what happened a minute, hour, day or year ago, or thinking about what to say or do next. You taste, smell, hear, see and touch what you are doing.

Clip 1: Everyday Mindfulness (4 mins 45 secs)

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

- [What surprised you about the content of the short video clip?](#)
- [What strategy might you be able to employ?](#)

It was Catherine McAuley's demeanour to be present to whoever she ministered to, and this is evident in her oft repeated quote "A good beginning is of great importance.... You must waste some time with visitors." from her letter to Frances Warde (Sullivan, 2004, pp. 323-324)

Read in the extracts at the end of this resource sheet, how one of Catherine's companions, Teresa White described her gift of presence

- How might you be present to those around you?

Byte 3: Acceptance of Who We Are

Self- acceptance starts with awareness of self. It is knowing and being honest with ourselves about what our strengths and weaknesses are; what makes us tick and what pushes our buttons; and then to intentionally accept the person we each uniquely are. Being self-aware does not happen in a day for most of us. It is a process that takes months, even years. It gradually deepens as we reflect on being able to accept who we truly are.

Clip 2: WHAT IS: Self-Acceptance (2 mins 43 secs)

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

- Name something that brings you joy
- Name something that brings you pain
- Name one of your strengths. How do you celebrate this strength?
- Name one of your weaknesses. How do you accept this weakness?

- What does the image say to you?



Byte 4: Adaptability and Openness to Change

We can see from her letter to Elizabeth Moore, how adaptable Catherine McAuley was to the changes happening around her, that were out of her control. (See extract).

- What strikes you in Catherine's words?

One significant display of our adaptability is our massive increase in electronic communication since social distancing measures, border closures and travel restrictions were put in place. Many found that they were able to connect with more people and participate in more events than ever before.

Another huge benefit that started becoming evident not long after people stopped travelling was the impact on the environment. Not only did the barely any cars on the road lead to the cleaner air that we could literally see, the carbon footprint we left from not just hopping on a plane was decimated. As an organisation, ISMAPNG averaged 90,871 kms **per month** this financial year to March. In April and May we have had a combined total of just 613kms.

- What adaptation did you make that would be worth continuing, post-Covid19?
- How might you enhance this action further?

Byte 5: Zoom conversation

We invite you to join our Zoom conversation to explore the content of this Module further, and to share your thoughts and/or insights with other participants.

Annette Schneider RSM and Carole Gan
11 June 2020

Byte 1 Resource

Prayer of Gratitude

by Sr. Joyce Rupp

We are grateful for eyes that can see and ponder, for taste buds that know the sensuous pleasures of eating and drinking, for hands that hold and touch and feel, for ears that can delight in music and the voice of a friend, for a nose that can smell the aroma of newly mown grass or delicious food, and can also breathe the air that gives us life.

We are grateful for the treasure of loved ones whose hearts of openness and acceptance have encouraged us to be who we are. We are grateful for their faithfulness, for standing by us when our weaknesses stood out glaringly, for being there when we were most in need and for delighting with us in our good days and our joyful seasons.

We are grateful for the eyes of faith, for believing in the presence of God, giving us hope in our darkest days, encouraging us to listen to our spirit's hunger, and reminding us to trust in the blessings of God's presence in our most empty days.

We are grateful for the ongoing process of becoming who we are, for the seasons within, for the great adventure of life that challenges and comforts us at one and the same time.

We are grateful for the messengers of God—people, events, written or spoken words—that came to us at just the right time and helped us to grow.

We are grateful for God calling us to work with our gifts, grateful that we can be of service and use our talents in a responsible and just way.

We are grateful that we have the basic necessities of life, that we have the means and the ability to hear the cries of the poor and to respond with our abundance.

We are grateful for the miracle of life, for the green of our earth, for the amazing grace of our history; we are grateful that we still have time to decide the fate of the world by our choices and our actions, grateful that we have it within our power to bring a divided world to peace.

<https://www.facebook.com/UDMission/posts/prayer-of-gratitudeby-sr-joyce-ruppwe-are-grateful-for-eyes-that-can-see-and-pon/682635165088752/>

Byte 2 Resource

Presence

Letter from Catherine McAuley to Frances Warde (24 November 1840)

“A good beginning is of great importance.... You must waste some time with visitors.”

(Sullivan, 2004, pp. 323-324)

Listen to how one of Catherine’s companions, Teresa White described her: gift of being wholly present to others, of making them feel accepted by and important to her, *“There was something about her so kind yet so discerning that you would fancy she read your heart. If you came to speak to her of the most trifling matter, although occupied with the most important affairs, she would instantly lay all aside and give you any satisfaction in her power.”* Empathy, the foundation stone to compassion, is our tuning into another. When we focus on ourselves, we tune ourselves out of the other’s world. Compassion can express itself in the simple act of presence – just being there, just showing up when another is in need. (Sullivan, 2017, pp. 23)

Byte 4 Resource

Adaptability and Openness to Change

Letter from Catherine McAuley to Elizabeth Moore (13 January 1839)

“It commenced with 2, Sister Doyle & I... We who began were prepared to do whatever was recommended - and in September 1830 we went with dear Sister Harley to Georges Hill – to serve a novitiate for the purpose of firmly establishing it. In December ’31 we returned – and the progress has gone on as you know. We now gone beyond 100 in number, and the desire to join seems rather to increase, though it was thought the foundations would retard it, it seems quite otherwise”

(Sullivan, 2004, pp. 323-324)

References

Sullivan, M. C. (2017) *A Shining Lamp: The Oral Instructions of Catherine McAuley* Washington: Catholic University of America Press

Sullivan, M. C. (2004) *The Correspondence of Catherine McAuley 1818-1841* Dublin: Four Courts Press