

## GC80 CONNECTION

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Our co-chairs of Deputation discerned that we should meet once a month to review and discuss key issues facing the church today and how we, as the church, would address them. So we were tasked with picking certain key issues in the Blue Binders, reading up on them, and sharing them with the entire Deputation. While this did allow us to be akamai (wise/smart) about pertinent issues facing us at GC, for me, it was more about building and living Beloved Community. As we engaged with each other, as we shared in prayerful meditation, our community of servants grew stronger and closer. *By my actions, teach my mind (Maka hana ka 'ike)*, is an ancient Hawaiian proverb. Some of us bemoaned the process of reading and making annotations so we could report back to the Deputation at our monthly meetings, but soon it became evident that our opening prayer and our presence was drawing us closer together, that the mystical presence of the Holy Spirit ('Uhane Hemolele) was at work, despite the messiness of our human condition.

I should honor ke Akua (God) with blessings in all circumstances. A few days before we were to leave for Baltimore, my doctor (ke Kauka) called me in for a conversation. He shared with me, once again, that I had been diagnosed with bladder cancer, so the many COVID-19 protocols the GC put in place were a real blessing to me.

Day 1 of the GC, the first of our deputies tested positive for COVID. Where was Jesus (Iesu) in this circumstance? How did I need to know Christ today? Did I need him to be a wonderful and wise counselor, to guide my very precarious steps here at GC and every other context of life? Or did I need him to be mighty, a source of strength and healing in my life? Then another text from a spouse of one of our group tested positive for COVID, but the deputy tested negative. GC's protocols said as close contact you isolate. Then the next day, another of our deputies

tested positive. At this point, I sure needed Christ (Cristo) to be the Prince of Peace, to bring peace to my troubled heart (puuwai or na'auao). How were we going to pivot and adjust to this trying circumstance? Well the good news is that Jesus Christ is just what I/we need and so much more.

How were we to fulfill our kuleana (responsibilities)? Through prayer (pule) and meditation (no'ono'o ana) we tap into the Holy Spirit ('Uhane Hemolele). Gracious Lord Jesus (Haku Iesu), I praise you today as my Wonderful Counselor. Through your word and spirit you guide my steps, helping me to live rightly. As we sat with our dilemma of a dwindling Deputation, we discerned to not let the deceiver to divide (Ku'e) us. All the more we had to continue to pray and ask our Lord to sustain us. I have to admit, I was concerned if I contracted COVID after just having been diagnosed with cancer a few day earlier. I could have been in dire straights. But I/we persevered (Ho'omau) with great humility (Ha'aha'a) as our Wonderful Counselor guided our footsteps. We supported each other and encouraged each other. We had meals together and prayed together as a Beloved Community.

Enter the Mighty God (Akua) El Shaddai. You are Emmanuel, God with us. Through you I/we can do all things. Be my/our Mighty God today. And although my strength was waning with these 14 hour days, God sustained me, he sustained all of us.

Ho'onani to you Ke Akua all praise and glory to you, God and Creator of the Universe. You are Love (Aloha) and you will never let us go. New life and purpose infused us as we cared (Mālama) for each member of our Deputation. We were checking in on our members who were quarantined in their hotel rooms. And all of our members who tested positive were pretty sick. So all the more we prayed for our isolated 'ohana, and sought the wisdom (na'auao) of ke Akua (God) which resides at our very core, in our DNA passed down from our ancestors (Nana i ke Kumu).

About 30 years ago I was introduced to contemplative prayer, and it has been an anchor for me, especially in challenging times. This is my 4th diagnosis of cancer. The illness is draining my energy, we are putting in very long days attending to the business of the Church and God, and I am tired. My deputation is encouraging me and making sure I'm eating well and getting rest, I am making sure I spend quiet time with God (ke Akua) in prayerful meditation so I can be Pono, enduring understanding. Contemplation in action. Enter the Prince of Peace (Maluhia). Because of your sacrifice on the cross, I/we can experience peace with God and peace with others in the midst of seeming chaos.

In Baltimore, I was ready for the homeless people as we trekked to and from the Convention Center, I always had a few dollars. And we brought a huge variety of macadamia nuts and macadamia nut candies to share with those we encountered: hotel workers, fellow deputies, and the many homeless we encountered. All of these and so much more was the privilege of representing Hawai'i at GC.

Grace, undeserved favor and blessing is who God is, not something he occasionally doles out. I am blessed to have the privilege of serving as Archdeacon of our Diocese. I am blessed to have the experience of GC in Baltimore. I also have to touch on what a great privilege it was to be asked to assist in morning prayer. The team assembled was a shining example of ke Akua's Aloha in our lives as we prayed and sung together. More of the blessings of a God who is like a loving Father who protects and nurtures us.