Transition Leads to Transformation

...with God’s grace and presence within us, we may realize our full potential to which God invites us and become all that we are capable of becoming.

Transformation: Moving through Change
We began this section on Life Transitions with the quote “Change is inevitable; transformation is optional.” It is our hope that this resource will assist us in engaging each of the transitions in our life in a way that will foster a process of transformation within us. In Tender Courage we read that “Catherine’s deepest theology consisted in her belief that the cross was part of life. To embrace it released new and creative powers from suffering, pain and death. She believed sorrows were to be felt, yet transcended through the free choice to yield—learning through yielding the lesson of the seed’s dying to come to new life. Everything in life has the power to ennoble and transform, for ‘without the Cross the real Crown cannot come.’” (Joanna Regan, RSM, and Isabelle Keiss, RSM, Tender Courage)

“We delight in the beauty of the butterfly but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.” – Maya Angelou

Transition is the process of change that leads us to transformation in our lives. To use a common metaphor, through this transitional process, the caterpillar becomes what it was ultimately created to be. It moves from one state
to another via metamorphosis until it is finally “transformed” into a butterfly. Like all of Creation, we know that God does not allow us to stay in the same place. Our lives are continually in the process of transition, moving from one place or space to the next. God moves and changes us so that we may be “transformed” into the persons that we were created to be.

We make a full journey each time we face change. In this journey, God gives us space to learn, to grow, to become, to enjoy, to “get grounded” before we move to the next season in our lives. This process of transition to transformation becomes the spiritual journey that is repeated throughout our lives. (Transition to Transformation, A Spiritual Journey, 2014; https://www.transition2transformation)

Life is a journey. Transitions are changes we encounter as we travel our journey through life. Achieving wholeness and holiness requires traversing difficult terrains of real life with all of its challenges. We trust that God will bring to completion in us the eternal design of people destined to live fully and love wholeheartedly. (Wilkie Au, SJ, By Way of the Heart: Toward a Holistic Christian Spirituality, Paulist Press, NY)

The paradox of transformation is the paradox of death/resurrection, a time of dying to what was as we move into what will be. It is a strange mix of color and darkness, of knowing and unknowing, as we face the multiple transitions and changes of life. We move with and into the Mystery of God as these transformative moments find us suspended in a place where we must let go and leap into the unknown.

The grace of transformation is the gift to trust that all things will be well as new ways of being and living arise from the ashes. We can’t pretend to understand the paradox as we stand in the midst of change; we grasp neither the immensity of the challenge nor the immensity of the love that sustains us in this transforming process. While it does not make sense to our linear mind, we are invited to trust in the merciful God who supports us in this suspended place, giving us all we need to lift the wings of our heart.
Trust does not minimize the terror we know as we make these passages of transition. In fact, our feelings are very real and must be honored in truth rather than ignored in judgment and denial. If we fail to face these emotions in truth, the heat of harbored rage will destroy us, and the weight of unvoiced sadness will sink us into despair. These voices of our soul demand honest acknowledgement and release if we are to move beyond the pain.

Our task is to compassionately stay with ourselves in this passage through paradox, mindful that we need simply to ask in trust as we surrender into the breath of God who holds us together here, making all things new. (Doris Klein, CSA, *Journey of the Soul*, pp. 55-56)

**Questions for Reflection**

How have transactions in your life led to transformation?
What new life are you experiencing now as a result of a difficult transition?
Quotes from Catherine McAuley

“We should never falter in our confidence that God will make all things turn to the best.”

“Receive with all your heart, the Cross which God sends in any shape or form He pleases, so as to make it valuable to you.”

“Put your whole confidence in God; He will never see you want.”

“The only return God requires of us for all His favours is a return of love.”

“We have one solid comfort amidst this tripping about, our hearts can always be in the same place, centered in God, for whom alone we go forward or stay back.”

“Though want of health or capacity may hinder a sister from sharing the active duties of the Institute, yet she is doing a great deal both for God and the Institute, if she is kind and charitable to all.”

“This is your life: joys and sorrows mingled, one succeeding the other.”
From the Constitutions

#4 Through the special ministry of prayer and patient suffering, we witness to union with the crucified Christ, encouraging those engaged in other works of mercy and interceding for the whole church.

#8 We strive to witness to mercy when we reverence the dignity of each person, create a spirit of hospitality and pursue integrity of word and deed in our lives. Recognizing our own human weakness, we know that only through God’s mercy can we be merciful.

#10 Through prayer we adore God as the Merciful One; we seek to discover God’s movement in us and in our world: we learn how to forgive and we intercede for ourselves and for others.

From Tender Courage

Catherine’s deepest theology consisted in her belief that the cross was part of life. To embrace it released new and creative powers from suffering, pain and death. She believed sorrows were to be felt, yet transcended through the free choice to yield—learning through yielding the lesson of the seed’s dying to come to new life. Everything in life has the power to ennoble and transform, for “without the Cross the real Crown cannot come.”
SCRIPTURE PASSAGES FOR TIMES OF TRANSITION

Gen 12: 1ff Journey of Abraham and Sarah (trust)
Exodus Journey of change/transformation
Ruth 1: 16-18 Ruth leaves her homeland
Isaiah 43: 1-5 Be not afraid!
Jeremiah 29: 11-14 Promise – future full of hope (trust)
Luke 13: 10-13 The bent-over woman
   “What needs to be done for you to stand up straight during this transition?”
Luke 18: 35-43 The blind man from Jericho
   Allow Jesus to ask: “What do you want me to do for you?”
   “Where are you on this journey through transition? What is Jesus saying to you?”
John 12: 24 “Unless a grain of wheat dies…”
John 14:27 Jesus promises peace
John 20: 9-21 Belief in possibilities
John 20 and 21 The time between Jesus’s death and Pentecost
   (the “in-between time” for the disciples)
Acts 1:4 Jesus tells the disciples to have patience.