**Some Thoughts for Online and Telephone Pastoral Supervision and Spiritual Direction**

Most of the notes below apply to both online (e.g. Zoom, FaceTime, email) and telephone spiritual direction/pastoral supervision. I felt it was important to put together as more people have moved away from face-to-face conversations during this time of the Pandemic.

**Preparation**

* **Prepare your space –** you might have to change where you would normally be for face-to-face spiritual direction/pastoral supervision so thinking about your personal space may be important. For example, what are you looking at while you are facing the screen or on the telephone? What noise distractions may need to be dealt with?
* **Prepare yourself –** one helpful piece of advice from someone who does a lot of online working was that it is helpful to go for a short walk before an online meeting in particular. Probably afterwards as well.
* **Prepare for the session –** have everything to hand nearby e.g. notebook, Bible, diary/phone calendar, water.
* **Contact before the session** – ask your directee what they would prefer and also think about timings as you might find that for you or your supervisee/directee, your first online conversation might need to be shorter. You might want to agree that if you are disconnected what will be the arrangements. For example, will you accept an unexpected ending, be in touch by email, use the telephone or re-enter the meeting?

**Beginning of the session**

* Begin the session by asking how the directee would like to start. Do they want to have a similar time to when you meet face-to-face or would they prefer a different way to begin? Check about timings. Mention that it might make sense to have some informal catch-up time about their situation in the Pandemic. Be aware that the directee will probably want to ask how you are as well. As these are unusual times it could be helpful to have a couple of sentences prepared, or to share more than you usually would.
* For more creative approaches using miniatures, objects such as stones and buttons, images, drawing, mapping etc, it might be helpful if these are ‘found’ at the beginning of the session and during the conversation alter the camera angle to focus on objects being used. If on the phone, this could be described by the directee/supervisee.
* During the session it may be necessary to be more aware of boundaries than usual, especially online. Those in therapeutic settings find that for some people there is a more relaxed sense, which they call ‘disinhibition’. It might be helpful to name and explore this with your directee/supervisee and to use it as an opportunity for exploring new possibilities.
* If you are having a telephone conversation you might want to ask the directee to describe a little bit about where they are to help move into their ‘space’.

**Ending the session**

* Before you finish it is helpful to review how both of you felt the session went and think about if you would change anything for next time, especially with using online communication.
* For those who are new to these forms of spiritual direction/pastoral supervision it does become easier over time, for both the directee and spiritual director.

**Other considerations**

* Some directees/supervisees may prefer not to be in contact or their home situation may not be a ‘safe’ environment for online or telephone conversations. Email may be another way of keeping in touch. Sending someone an inspirational link or a scriptural verse, which can help to anchor them safely until you area able to meet in person, may give them a sense of hope to hold.
* For all your directees/supervisees your relationship will have changed during this time and acknowledging this together will further deepen your spiritual direction relationship.