

**Curio: A Liturgy for the Lean**  
**Week #3: November 21-25**  
**Theme: The Waiting**



**The Canon**

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## *Welcome & Introduction*

Welcome to Curio: A Liturgy For The Lean. I am grateful that you have chosen to participate in this liturgy that I have compiled. One definition of Liturgy means “work of the people”; it is my hope that through this material you would put in spiritual and mental work. Curio means “emaciated” or “weak.” The purpose of this liturgy is to explore the lessons learned from a period of time when my faith felt emaciated. It was during the Fall of 2012 and I had lost my way. At the time, the “turning”-the losing my way- felt terrifying. The foundations of my faith, my very being, were shifting, and I didn’t know what to do with that. I realize now that the turning was necessary to bring about something new. But at the time, it felt like death.

Each week during November, I will be sending out a 3-part liturgy. This is Week #3: The Waiting. Last week we spoke of the Dying, and how there were many different types of death.

Oftentimes, after death, we are left waiting. Waiting for the grief to pass. Waiting for resolution. Waiting for answers to our questions: Why? When will it end? Why does it hurt so bad?

Our temptation is to get through the waiting as quickly as possible, in order to find the comfort and resolution we seek. However, one of life’s greatest paradoxes is this: it is in the waiting that we become whole. It is in the paradoxes that our faith is forged. And it is in the seeking that we find.

It’s a hard lesson to embrace the paradoxes, but one we must embrace on our spiritual journeys. When we learn to embrace ourselves, paradoxes and all, we truly - as Soren Kierkegaard says - can become ourselves, with God’s help.

. This week, I invite you into the waiting. I invited you into the paradoxes and questions of life, knowing that in each question, a lesson is just waiting to be found. And as we wait, may we always work for truth, and beauty, and for the common good.

I invite you to be lean.

*\*Note: Each element of the following Liturgy is related in some way to the theme of “The Dying.” Some of the elements are optional. I invite you to engage and bring as much, or as little, energy to this as you are able. Remember: have grace with yourself. If you would like to discuss anything further, please feel free to contact me. Be Well!*

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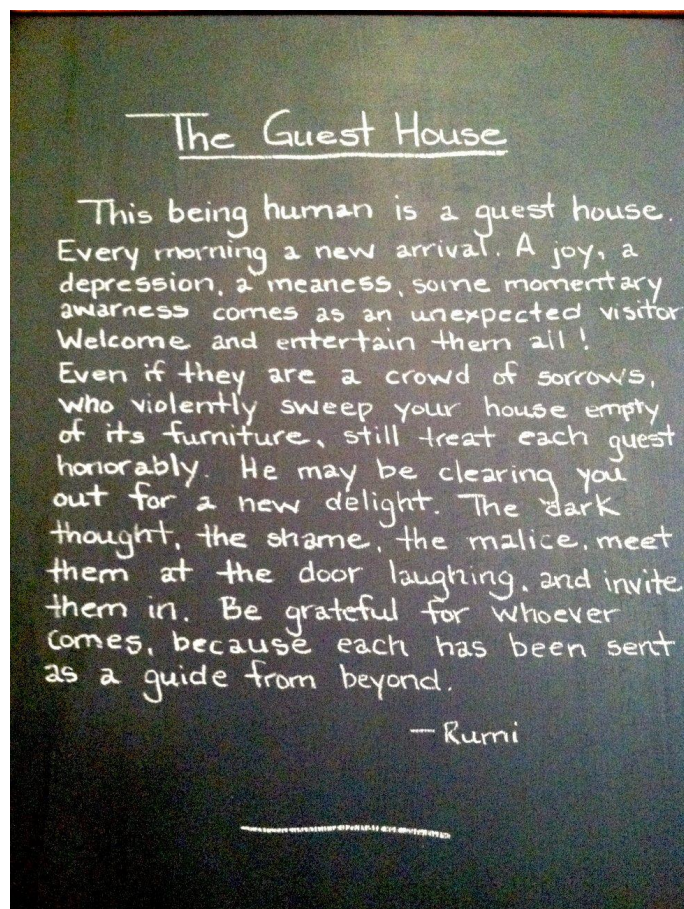
## **1. Call To Worship**

The purpose of a call to worship is to center ourselves as we prepare to learn and think about the theme of dying. It is an intentional practice to take a posture of learning, and of opening up, to the things around us-both that which we can see, and that which cannot be seen. The following three selections invite us into taking a "lean posture."

### **Selection #1: Psalms 22:1-2**

"My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish? My God, I cry out by day but you do not answer, by night but I find no rest."

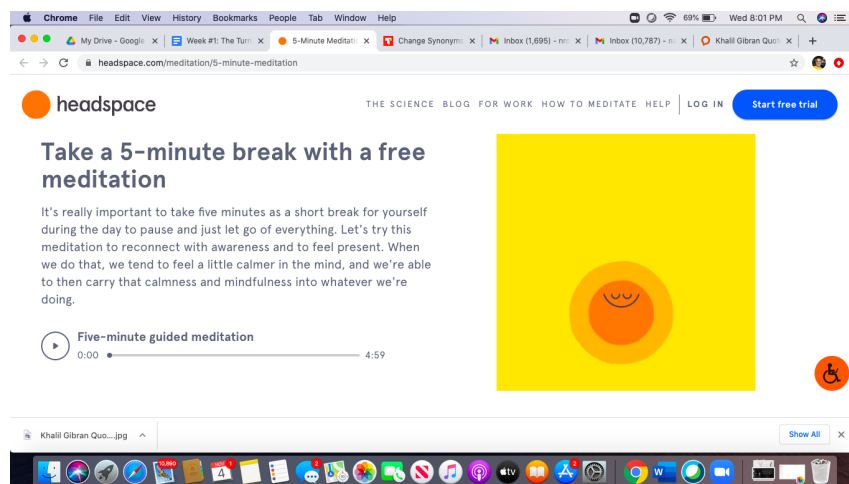
### **Selection #2: "The Guest House" by Rumi**



### Selection #3: 5 Minute Guided Meditation (Optional)

*Note: This is a link to a guided meditation on Headspace. Click on the link and it will take you to the Headspace meditation. Scroll down until you see the Meditation. Refer to the picture below.*

Click Here: [Guided Meditation](#)



## 2. Hymn (Song)

A hymn is an ancient song that unites a community in worship of God. While various mediums are used to tell the Story, singing offers an emotional response to that which is being experienced. Songs are an artform which help to open the listener up to the spiritual. Below is a song I wrote when I was lean in the Autumn of 2012.

**Note:** Click the link below to hear my song *Falling Leaves (Part Two)* on Soundcloud. Once on Soundcloud, click the play button. See picture below.

Click Here: [Dig \(Part One\)](#)

Click to open the link.  
Once open, click the  
orange button to play the  
song.



### 3. *Litany*

*A litany is a call-and-response in which a leader makes a proclamation, and the community, in unison, responds in a singular voice. If you are with others, feel free to say this litany together. If you are by yourself, feel free to engage however you wish. One option might be to read the "leader" parts silently, then speak the "People" parts aloud.*

#### Litany (Dana Gioia)

**Leader (L):** Be with us now in our mourning, and in our sadness.

We acknowledge that the only way out of our grief is through it.

We acknowledge that we must pay attention to our emotions in order to be whole persons.

We acknowledge that we would often rather avoid our sadness than pay attention to it.

We acknowledge that grief can be sticky, unpredictable, and hard to shake off.

We acknowledge that there are some mountains we cannot move under our own power.

**People (P:)** Over and over, You have shown us that You are good, and Your love endures forever.

**L:** Help us to walk faithfully through our pain and sadness.

Help us to engage in lamentation, in the tradition of the saints who came before us.

Help us to remember that our anger, sadness, disappointment, and grief do not put you off.

**P: Help us to be moving forward:**

**Toward growth**

**Toward wisdom**

**Toward emotional health**

**Toward wholeness**

**Toward reconciliation between our faith and our emotions.**

**L:** We are helpless, and require Christ's assistance.

We are undone, and require re-making.

We are brokenhearted, and require healing.

We are poor in spirit, and in need of the kingdom of Heaven.

**P: Over and over, You have shown us that You are good, and Your love endures forever.**

**Amen**

## 4. Reading

*A reading is a selection or selections of text that allow the reader to engage more fully in the theme presented. In this case, the theme is that of "dying", of things not being as they appear, of losing that which one holds most dear. of starving to death. of being lean.*

*From "Letters to a young poet" by Rainier Maria Rilke"*

“I want to beg you as much as I can...to be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves...Do not now seek answers which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer...Take whatever comes with great trust, and if only it comes out of your will, out of some need of your innermost being, take it upon yourself and hate nothing.”

## ***5. The Message***

*The Message, often called a Sermon, is the pinnacle of what a teacher or preacher is attempting to convey. The Message often utilizes a variety of elements to deliver a point. This "message" is an excerpt from a journal entry written during my time living in Central America. It describes the Spiritual Death that I experienced in the summer of 2008.*

*Today's message is an excerpt from "Spiritual Direction" by Henri Nouwen (compiled by Michael Christensen and Rebecca Laird)*

“...this leads to the third aspect of living the questions, namely: live the questions until God, sometimes like lightning, reveals enough guidance to enable you to live confidently in the present moment.

To live the questions requires that you first look within yourself, trusting that God is present and at work within you. This is a very difficult task, because in our world we are constantly pulled away from our innermost self and encouraged to look for answers outside of ourselves. If you are a lonely person, you have no inner rest to ask, wait, and listen. You crave people in the hope that another will bring you answers. You want them here and now. But by first embracing solitude in God's presence, you can pay attention to your inner, clamoring self before looking to others for community and accountability. This has nothing to do with egocentrism or unhealthy introspection because, in the words of Rainer Maria Rilke's advice to a young poet, "what is going on in your innermost being is worthy of your whole love."

When God enters into the center of our lives to unmask our illusion of possessing final solutions and to disarm us with always deeper questions, we will not necessarily have an easier or simpler life, but certainly a life that is honest, courageous, and marked with the ongoing search for truth. Sometimes, in living the questions, answers are found. More often, as our questions and issues are tested and mature in solitude, the questions simply dissolve.

Seeking guidance and direction will not necessarily yield an easy solution or an answer to the inner quest for meaning. Any teacher or director can only be a mirror reflecting a view, or sometimes an arrow pointing beyond itself...

The greatest call of a spiritual director is to open the door to the opportunities for spiritual growth and sometimes to provide a glimpse of the great mysterious light behind the curtain of life and of the Lord who is the source of all



knowing and the giver of life. To receive spiritual direction is to recognize that God does not solve our problems or answer all our questions, but leads us closer to the mystery of our existence where all questions cease.”

## 6. *The Reader's Response (Optional)*

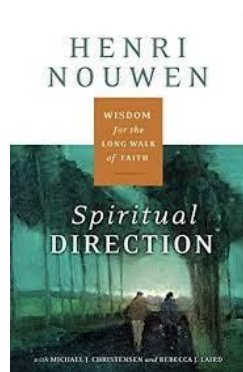
The Reader's Response is a chance for the reader to respond to the Message. This is optional. If you feel inclined, use one of the options below to respond to the message, or find your own way to respond.

### **Option #1: Journal**

\*If you are looking for more structure, consider these questions

- Identify and name a persistent question at this time in your life.
- Reflect on a time in your life when a painful or persistent question was dismissed or answered glibly by others.
- What impact did that response have on you?

### **Option #2: Read this book: "Spiritual Direction" by Henri Nouwen**



### **Option #3: Lectio Divina with "The Guest House" by Rumi (see quote in the call to worship above)**

Below is a link for how to engage with the Ancient Practice of Lectio Divina:

[Click Here For A Lectio Divina Tutorial](#)

## 7. *The Lord's Prayer*

*The Lord's Prayer is likely the most well-known portion of Scripture in the world. Here, I offer an alternative version of this well-known text that is appropriate for the given theme.*

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace—hallowed be your name.

Immanuel, God with us—hallowed be your name.

In us, through us, and around us, your kingdom come  
where the wolf will live with the lamb and the lion will feed with the calf.

Bread of life, feed us with your truth.

For our indifference to the wonder of your coming, forgive us.

Protect us from the constant dangers and enticing temptations we face each day.

Word who became flesh and lived among us,  
we have seen your glory, full of grace and truth.

As You come to us now, and You will come to us again in glory,  
when we will join all heaven and earth in giving you blessing  
and honor and glory and might forever!

Amen

### **8. Exhortation:**

*The Exhortation is a final charge, a last word of motivation to go into the world as you are, and to be your true self. Until next week, consider this charge as a parting word of encouragement.*

**Success is not  
final, failure  
is not fatal: it  
is the courage  
to continue  
that counts.**

**- Winston Churchill**