

FROM GMU'S NEW PROVOST

the dressmaker
sings and sings
mouth full of pins

- Haiku by Raymond Roseliep

Dear GMU Community,

I'm writing to introduce myself; as of last month, I'm GMU's provost. I tell you this with some wonder and trepidation, as I acknowledge with both appreciation and admiration the long, dedicated, and accomplished service of Michael Conley, who previously held this position, and of Jean Conley, whose work also helped to define it. I come to GMU with a background in ministry, psychology, peace studies (which I've taught at GMU for several years), education, activism, and nonprofit administration. I also write - mostly articles on cultural and social justice issues - and am a student and practitioner of haiku.

As I gradually get to know each of you, I'm struck by your multiple, holy endeavors. Some of you are caring for both little kids and aging parents; many of you have day jobs with considerable responsibilities; many others of you are activists, in issues ranging from church reform to peacebuilding to countering racism to climate change. And you are doing these things as you study at or teach for GMU, or work in a staff position that makes the studying and teaching possible. The GMU community is home to people with a most dangerous combination of qualities: compassion, creativity, and academic discipline - fueled with the energy that comes from commitment to a vision for a better world.

In other words, our mouths are full of pins - our tools, for the work we do. How can they *not* be, given the needs we see around us - the needs of a suffering, vulnerable planet? Singing with a mouthful of pins is a risky, prickly way to go about things. Yet, sing we do - a song that we are always learning, a sacred song that heals and gives life.



Honored to be singing with you -

Mary Ann Cejka, M.Div., M.S., Ph.D.
Provost