

Meditation for the Fourth Tuesday After Easter

*I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears;
I drench my couch with my weeping.
My eyes waste away because of my grief; they grow weak because all of my foes.
Depart from me all you workers of evil, for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping.
The Lord has heard my supplication; the Lord accepts my prayer.
All my enemies shall be ashamed and struck with terror;
they shall turn back, and in a moment be put to shame. Psalm 6:6-10*

In these times it is good to turn to the Psalms. Psalmists know about grief. With them there is no holding back.

It has been over two months since we learned about Covid 19. It consumes the news and our lives. We read about people who have died, and because of social distancing there can be no funerals, no outpouring of communal tears and remembrance. There is the young Navaho mother. There are countless hospital workers, plant workers, prisoners, nursing home residents and aides who have lost their lives and loves. There are people who feel lonely and isolated. There are people who live in fear. There are people who simply are angry and look for targets to place blame. Perhaps they are our family, our friends. Perhaps they are us.

On the radio last week there was a story called "A Community Poem To Cope In Crisis". This poem is a modern psalm, which includes these lines: *What I am learning about grief / is that it can come like a whisper or storm through loud as thunder / it leaves a hollow, to be filled with a new planting. / And, when you wake for another day that feels oddly the same as the last, It crawls / right back into your lap. . . It is anger and denial / It is chaotic laughter from splintered memories / It is jagged cries and single tears / It is numb and indifferent/ It is a pinprick of light, promising / a slow semblance of normality returned.*

There is no one way to grieve. There are no blueprints. All of us experience it differently. However, one thing is certain. We cannot avoid or escape grief. We need to acknowledge it within us, confront it head on, and succumb to the emotions grief calls forth, to the darkness it releases that can threaten to overwhelm. Only then we can move on.

Another thing is certain. We are not alone. God is well acquainted with grief and carries us though it. The Psalmist knows this. The Psalmist also knows that grieving will come to an end. Joy will return. Mourning will turn into dancing. We know this too through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The radio poem ends with these lines:
*What I am learning about grief is that it is still learning about me.
Learning that I am strong and resilient
If the trees can keep dancing, so can I.*

Grieve well. Remember resurrection. Practice your dancing.

Pastor Kate Bottorff

