Morning Devotional

Diocesan Center

May 23, 2023

**Pray**

Some of you say, “Joy is greater than sorrow,” and

others say, “Nay, sorrow is the greater.”

But I say unto you, they are inseparable.

Together they come, and when one sits alone with

you at your board, remember that the other is

asleep upon your bed.

Khalil Gibran

The Prophet

**Read** *John 16:19-24*

Jesus knew what they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, “Are you discussing among yourselves what I meant when I said, ‘A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me’? Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy. When a woman is in labor, she has pain, because her hour has come. But when her child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy of having brought a human being into the world. So you have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. On that day you will ask nothing of me. Very truly, I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete.”

**Reflect**

It seems that human life is suspended between two poles, hanging like scales between sorrow and joy. It seems we are constantly balancing these two states of being. Within tragedy there can be sorrow and joy. Within celebration there can be both joy and sorrow.

Perhaps this is what Jesus explains to his disciples. The disciples speak and express their bewilderment. They have been listening for quite a time and are now confused. Jesus talks directly to them about their lament, mourning, and pain.

The pain that Jesus describes is akin to the intense pain of childbirth. Jesus attests that the disciples feel sorrow. The grief of the disciples is a present reality as they struggle with what Jesus has revealed to them. Jesus does not tell them to snap out of it, ignore the pain, or pretend their grief does not exist. Jesus says to them plainly, “You have grief now.”

In the metaphor that Jesus uses to describe transformation from sorrow to joy, he explains that a woman in labor experiences pain. Jesus does not say that her pain is not real. Jesus asserts that she does not remember it because of the joy that comes afterward. Joy and sorrow mingle in the room together, but the joy will be final. When we can rejoice, like the woman in childbirth, the pain and grief are not erased, but we do not remember them in the same way anymore.

Every sorrow in our lives helps illuminate something: a new journey, a different way to make meaning, an interesting sense of joy. We need not dwell on grief until it makes us depressed, angry, and immobilized people. However, we do need to acknowledge it. We strive for joy while remembering our sorrow. We allow God’s grace to remind us that, both in our joy and in our sorrow, God is with us.

*Excerpts from the Pastoral Perspective*

*S. Vance Goodman*

*You are invited to share your thoughts and feelings regarding these readings.*

**Music**

Majestic Journey from Uplifitng Stories

by Christopher Salt and John Rowcroft

**Pray**

We thank you Lord for granting us strength and grace

sufficient for the number of our days;

be with us as we move through the unfolding of our time

in humble obedience to your will,

in sensitivity to your Spirit,

and in joyful expectation of your kingdom.

Illuminate our hearts, our paths, and our vision

as we go along Your Way. Amen.

**Sources**

*Reflection: Feasting on the Gospels* © 2015 Westminster John Knox Press *Closing Prayer: adapted from The Hours: Midday, Every Moment Holy Volume I,* © 2019 *Douglas McKelvey*