

GRIEF: THE PAIN OF TOO MUCH LOVING!

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As I quietly center myself to contemplate the content for this coming March CEN reflection, I am mindful that it will be read by many of you during the season of Lent. My mind drifts to the different attitudes we seem to have between Advent and Christmas and Lent and Easter. One is filled with joy, anticipation, happiness, and a hope for peace. It is a season of heightened energy, in our giving and receiving, and in our acts of kindness and thoughtfulness as we celebrate the birth of a child – the birth of Love into our troubled world.

On the other hand, the season of Lent, has a different feel, a different sense about it. It feels heavier, harder, more difficult and challenging, to be avoided or to be approached with hesitancy and uncertainty, especially regarding the availability of our time and other commitments. Yet what is Lent if not an opportunity to depth, to look within, and to find space to ponder the very condition, state and wellbeing of the Love which came to birth within each of us when we drew our first breath and cried!

This Lent, as I ponder the questions; ‘Where am I?’ ‘How am I?’ I find myself drawn to the grief that Jesus may have felt as he set his face towards Jerusalem and ultimately to Calvary. Then, I find myself left with holding the deeper question; ‘What enables one to freely journey towards such pain and suffering?’ Deep within me I know the answer is Love! Only Love would have drawn Jesus to set his face towards Jerusalem this one last time. We are constantly reminded of this each year as we celebrate the liturgies of Holy Week.

As I enter into this challenging season of lent, I find myself dwelling on two different quotes which, over my lifetime, I have drawn upon at both difficult, and painful times:



“I sat with my anger long enough until she told me her real name was grief”

and

“Grief is the ache of too much loving.”

As I journey with Jesus this Lent, I ponder the anger which he may have felt regarding the world and the society in which he found himself. He saw the corruption, greed, hunger for status and power, the huge injustices and the inequalities towards the poor and marginalized and the seemingly overwhelming powerlessness of anyone to change the status quo. As he journeyed, deeply convinced of the mission for which he was called, his inner anger at the circumstances surrounding him would have been entwined also with a deep sadness and grief at humanity's blindness, resistance, and inability to change and evolve. I am left wondering as Jesus set his face towards Jerusalem this last time, was his anger slowly, quietly, invisibly being transformed within him into the deep grief, the deep ache of too much loving? Was this the same deep grief of too much loving that he also felt when he wept over Jerusalem? A grief that has the power to penetrate beyond all of humanity's darkness, cruelties and shadows and be transformed into the newness of Love's pure white Light!

How easy it seems to parallel Jesus' times with our present times! We have the added advantage of technology now, so we can even see, learn and experience so much more of our world today. At a global level we see the continued effects of the pandemic, climate change, the rise of corruption, greed, unhealthy power, inequality, and injustices. One cannot help but feel anger and deep grief for our world in its present state.

This grief which we may feel as we watch or read the daily news can leave many of us with a sense of powerlessness and helplessness culminating into feeling a deep inner ache and pain. We have a choice to either live in our own little busy worlds because it is all too much, or retreat into our cocoons of denial and avoidance, or we can dare to see with open eyes and feel with



wounded hearts this ache, this pain, at the core of our very being. Then, in truth, we too will experience the grief of too much loving, and our hearts will be at one with the suffering of all humanity. It is this very Love that will enable us to immerse ourselves into this world's present darkness and help us to dare to set our face courageously towards whatever lies ahead. It is this Love which will be the driving force that gifts us with the inner strength to go to where we would rather not go.

Perhaps we can create another quote from the two mentioned above:

"I sat with my grief long enough and she told me her real name was Love."

We all yearn for Love. We seek something 'more' in life, something that continually draws us yet seemingly evades us. We are constantly drawn to evolve, to become, yet we struggle with an inner tide of resistance that pulls us back towards the comfortable, the normal, the ordinary, towards all that is known to us, and which makes us feel safe and in control. To

evolve is to submit to change, albeit apprehensively, to be cast into the unknown, with both anticipation and fear, to let go of all that is seemingly normal and secure. If we take a moment to look back over our lives, from the moment we took our first breath and cried out into this world, to how we are now, we can see the huge changes that have occurred over our lifetime. Whether we like it or not we have evolved, we have changed and will continue to do so. Lent is a good time to contemplate our journey thus far and then, in love and trust, set our faces once more to the unknown paths ahead – to our own Jerusalem!

So, what does the road of 2023 hold for you? What may you be called to set your face towards? As I journey into this year, I am conscious that it is highly probable that ahead for me there may be a crossroad, and that I will need to choose one of the two paths that lie ahead and set my face towards the unknown. All crossroads require reflection, discernment and an ultimate letting go of one way for another. It was so as Jesus set his face towards Jerusalem. Whichever road is chosen it will inevitably hold sorrow, pain, and the deep grief of letting go, for one cannot walk on two roads at the same time! I hope and trust that this Lenten season will enable us all to sit with our grief long enough to hear Love's deeper call, and then, in trust, enable us to find the courage to set our face towards that path. As we continue to evolve, life seems to endlessly beckon us onwards towards unknown and unexpected horizons!

In this Lenten season, may we as CEN members take the space and time to:

- Sit with ourselves and our emotions.
- Consciously strive to discover our deeper inner truths.
- Become more aware of our evolving truest selves.
- Surrender more freely to the flow of life with all its challenges and changes.
- Dare to let go of all that which we would rather cling onto.
- Let the pain and ache of grief transform us into a new depth of love beyond our comprehension.

The Drawing...

Transforming...

Evolving... **LOVE OF EASTER!**

