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Reflection for April 4



By Dan Dick

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. Romans 8:18-23

All of human creation is waiting with eager anticipation for the pandemic to pass, for rescue from a force so foreign and large that we cannot figure out a way to fight it. Our “salvation” is beyond our own control, and so we wait. But waiting does not have to be passive. Waiting can be a time of preparation.

Waiting can be a “grace space” where we can seek to learn and grow. For me,

this has been a time to reflect deeply on my place in the world. As the pandemic has hit the United States, I am painfully aware of all I take for granted, and I am humbled to realize that I now face what the majority of the world deals with every day – scarcity of needed resources, life and death decisions beyond my control, anxiety about tomorrow, inadequate medical supplies and technologies. For years I have been *sympathetic* to the plight of the poor and marginalized worldwide. I have cared deeply about what happened to others. Now, however, I begin to *empathize* with those who live in conditions of scarcity and need. I am now better able to feel what others feel, to experience what others experience. My prayer for myself is that I might live more fully in empathy rather than sympathy once the pandemic passes.

Gracious God transform us. In this time of worldwide threat, teach us. In this time of heightened anxiety and fear, enlighten us. In this time of loss and grief, strengthen us. In this time of physical distancing and isolation, redeem us. Lord, make us new people, people who are learning from the current challenge. Let us not despair. Let us not lose hope. Let us not be so focused on the virus that we lose sight of the vision for tomorrow. Make us truly thankful for all we take for granted and use us to be your grace and healing for others. Change us, O God, into the people you need us to be. Amen.