



SISTERS OF CHARITY
OF LEAVENWORTH

October 15, 2020

To: SCLs and SCL Associates

From: SCL Council

These last six months of 2020 we have mourned the loss of loved ones in our human family along with grieving the loss of how we used to live individually and communally. Our world is hurting. We are hurting. And our God continues to breathe life within us and among us.

Reflecting on the Paschal Mystery, we seek to find meaning and transformation in the midst of these days.

The following reflection was created by LCWR. With permission we share the poems, prayer and reflections. We invite you to use this as you find helpful, individually, or with a prayer group.

Reflection

In *The Cure for Sorrow: A Book of Blessings for Times of Grief*, Jan Richardson writes, "...a blessing meets us in the place of deepest loss. In that place it offers us a glimpse of wholeness and claims that wholeness here and now." (p. xv) In her poem, "God of the Living" (**reprinted on page 3**) she speaks of how thin the wall between this world and the next is and invites us to lean against that wall and listen to the wisdom from the other side – the wisdom of the great cloud of witnesses who have gone before us.

Scripture too is replete with reminders of the accompaniment of those who have gone before us such as found in Hebrews 11:1, 12: 1-2: "Faith is confident assurance concerning what we hope for, and conviction about things we do not see....Since we ...are surrounded by this great cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every encumbrance that clings to us and persevere in running the race which lies ahead. Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus who is the pioneer and perfecter of our faith."

We need also to listen to the invitation from the future, from those who will come after us, for as Jan Richardson reminds us in her poem “Blessing for the Brokenhearted” (**reprinted on page 4**) the only cure for love is more of it.

Reflective Process

- Listen to peaceful music to quiet your mind and heart.
- Spend some time with the thoughts in the introduction above. Read and reflect on the scripture passage and the two poems.
- Take some time to lean against that wall of grief and listen to the wisdom on the other side.
- How am I experiencing grief as a profoundly humanizing experience? In what ways does it open me to the depths of the Paschal Mystery? What has helped me to realize this?
- How am I invited to forgive myself for the times I have failed to meet the needs of my loved ones? What may this be trying to teach me/us?
- What do we find ourselves cherishing in new ways?

Questions to Carry with Us

(not to try and answer, not to work on, just to carry with us)

- How might our individual and collective grief be in service of mission?
- How might this individual and collective grief we are experiencing be carving out in us a space for the new to emerge?

God of the Living

A Blessing

When the wall
between the worlds
is too firm,
too close.

When it seems
all solidity
and sharp edges.

When every morning
you wake as if
flattened against it,
its forbidding presence
fairly pressing the breath
from you
all over again.

Then may you be given
a glimpse
of how weak the wall
and how strong what stirs
on the other side,
breathing with you
and blessing you
still

forever bound to you
but freeing you
into this living,
into this world
so much wider
than you ever knew.

—Jan Richardson

Blessing for the Brokenhearted

There is no remedy for love but to love more.

—Henry David Thoreau

Let us agree
for now
that we will not say
the breaking
makes us stronger
or that it is better
to have this pain
than to have done
without this love.

Let us promise
we will not
tell ourselves
time will heal
the wound,
when every day
our waking
opens it anew.

Perhaps for now
it can be enough
to simply marvel

at the mystery
of how a heart
so broken
can go on beating,
as if it were made
for precisely this—

as if it knows
the only cure for love
is more of it,

as if it sees
the heart's sole remedy
for breaking
is to love still,

as if it trusts
that its own
persistent pulse
is the rhythm
of a blessing
we cannot
begin to fathom
but will save us
nonetheless.

—Jan Richardson