

A Mid-day Meditation

From

Sue's Perspective

This week I have selected four quotes that I feel speak to the circumstances of our lives today – the pandemic that knows no end and the continuing heartbreak of the Indigenous peoples of Canada as more unmarked graves are discovered at the sites of former residential schools.

"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." - Desmond Tutu

As a follower of Jesus, I have been taught to live in hope – hope for a good life, hope for love in my life, hope for a better world, hope for not just happiness but also for joy in life. There were plenty of occasions over the past year and a half when I thought that hope was a tenuous thing. But as I look back over the months, I realize that I didn't stop hoping. The darkness of heartbreak can descend like a cloud, weighing heavily on us. In our attempts to look up, we strain to see any sense in the world around us, wondering if the cloud will ever dissipate, and break apart letting in the light. Yet the light comes in regardless of the size of the crack.

"Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive." - Dalai Lama

Without love and compassion, we are empty, hollow shells. Jesus calls us to love our neighbours as ourselves. Loving people of our own culture whom we don't understand is difficult. Loving people of other cultures is difficult if we don't take the time to learn about them and their way of life. Showing compassion for a hurting human being, a hurting child of God, is essential for us to fulfil our humanity. The words are simple. The action is simple. Wrapping our heads and our hearts around this is the tough part. For reasons unknown to me, there are people who believe that the only true culture and way of life is their culture and way of life. Imposing these things on others is not only lacking in compassion but it is lacking in the love that we are called to have for our neighbours.

"It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light." - Aristotle Onassis

The people of Canada are currently in a place of darkness – a darkness caused by the inhumane treatment of so many children who were forced to attend residential schools and the unmarked graves of hundreds upon hundreds of those children. As a privileged white person, a Settler in this country, my heart breaks. Yet in my heart I know that there is light to be found as we walk through this dark time shoulder to shoulder with our Indigenous brothers and sisters. When we focus on our shared stories, we discover that we have more in common than any of us realize. We discover the light.

"We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow [humans]." - Herman Melville

There is a song that I learned when I was in Girl Guides, and it speaks to this quote from Melville. Let me close with the words of that song (please excuse the generic use of the word *man/brother*):

No man is an island,
No man stands alone,
Each man's joy is joy to me,
Each man's grief is my own.
We need one another,
So I will defend,
Each man as my brother,
Each man as my friend.

- Joan Baez