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Sunday April 23 '95

Dear Friends in Christ,

April 19, 1995 will go down in infamy; and it will also mark a transforming moment, for God's sovereign love and grace is the only power that is greater than the ignoble darkness that prevails in the human soul that creates the vicious wrong experienced by innocent people. We shall overcome the horrific dimensions of hate revealed in the intentional, planned destruction in the bombing of the Federal Building in OKC.

The stunning blast of vicious rage that tore apart our dreams, our babies, and our loved ones, shall not end in the nightmarish conclusion of our community. Christ will lead us forward along the ambiguous labyrinthine way.

In God's love,

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PAGE

Some help in transforming
our trauma.

① Read The Serenity Prayer
aloud as individuals and
families — each day.

Read Romans 8:28-39.

If children are in your home,
let them read, and explain
words they may not know.

② Here are some things to
do if children are traumatized
or troubled — many are:

* let them tell about their
feelings, in words and
in art/drawings.

* Fear, emotions (mad,
sad, 'had') are natural.

* Do not criticize them
for their feelings, or
make light of tears,
pains, hurts.

* let them pray. Spend
time with each one.

* Security/safety is a universal need.

Assure them how they can be safe, how
you will help them be safe.

* Answer simply, not elaborately, all their questions
about the tragedy of April 19.

THE SERENITY PRAYER

God grant me the
Serenity to accept the things
I cannot change,

Courage to change the things I can, and
Wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as the pathway to peace,

Taking, as He did, this sinful
World as it is, not as I would have it,

Trusting that He will make all
things right if I surrender
to His Will,

That I may be reasonably happy
in this life, and supremely
happy with Him forever in the next.
Amen.

Reinhold Niebuhr, 1892-1971

CHRIST'S BODY

Christ has no body now on earth but yours;
yours are the only hands with which he can do his
work,

yours are the only feet with which he can go about
the world,

yours are the only eyes through which his compassion
can shine forth upon a troubled world.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

St. Teresa of Avila, 1515-82

③ Both a child and an adult may need some assistance in forming words to express their inner feelings.

④ Anger is not evil. The Bible says: "Be angry but don't let the sun go down on your wrath." Express it nonviolently and let it go. Get free from controlling emotions that overtake your life.

⑤ Pray Psalm 62 (right, above) several times a day.

⑥ Read Ps. 46: 1-7 and pray John Donne's words.

⑦ God does not cause evil things to happen making us suffer for our sins. Read Luke 13: 1-5 - especially explain this to children.

⑧ Surrender to the higher will and love of God. Pray Charles de Foucauld's prayer.

MY RESCUE

Leave it all quietly to God, my soul,
my rescue comes from him alone.

from Psalm 62

AT OUR LAST AWAKENING

Bring us, O Lord, at our last awakening into the house and gate of heaven, to enter into that gate and dwell in that house, where there shall be no darkness nor dazzling but one equal light, no noise nor silence, but one equal possession, no ends or beginnings, but one equal eternity, in the habitations of thy majesty and thy glory, world without end.

John Donne, 1572-1631

I AM READY. . . I ACCEPT

Father,
I abandon myself into your hands;
do with me what you will.
Whatever you may do, I thank you:
I am ready for all, I accept all.
Let only your will be done in me,
and in all your creatures—
I wish no more than this, O Lord.
Into your hands I commend my soul;
I offer it to you with all the love of my heart,
for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself,
to surrender myself into your hands without reserve,
and with boundless confidence,
for you are my Father.

Charles de Foucauld, 1858-1916

⑨ Christ experienced the depths of our human tragedy, shouting from the cross the words of Psalm 22. Read that Psalm aloud, meditate on its conclusion and the Psalm that follows — Psalm 23.

Pray the Gaelic prayer (right).

⑩ Help others by letting them "Tell Their Story" of what April 19⁵² and following meant to them. Listening is an act of grace.

Pray Augustine's prayer and Read II Corinthians 4: 7-10.

⑪ Accept reality not illusion. Focus on the present day and the new reality of tomorrow. Try to understand how the "Confederate Soldier", in this prayer, could feel blessed.

IT IS ENOUGH

As the rain hides the stars,
as the autumn mist hides the hills,
as the clouds veil the blue of the sky,
so the dark happenings of my lot
hide the shining of thy face from me.
Yet, if I may hold thy hand in the darkness,
it is enough.

Since I know that though I may stumble
in my going, thou dost not fall.

Gaelic, translated by Alistair McLean

PRAYER FOR GOD'S HELP

O God, from whom to be turned is to fall,
to whom to be turned is to rise,
and with whom to stand is to abide for ever;
grant us in all our duties your help,
in all our perplexities your guidance,
in all our dangers your protection,
and in all our sorrows your peace,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.

St. Augustine, 354-430

I asked for strength that I might achieve;
I was made weak that I might learn humbly to obey.

I asked for health that I might do greater things;
I was given infirmity that I might do better things.

I asked for riches that I might be happy;
I was given poverty that I might be wise.

I asked for power that I might have the praise of men;
I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.

I asked for all things that I might enjoy life;
I was given life that I might enjoy all things.

I got nothing that I had asked for,
but everything that I had hoped for.

Almost despite myself my unspoken prayers were answered;
I am, among all men, most richly blessed.

Prayer of an unknown Confederate soldier

12 Find ways to give, even in the time of your own need.

Read Matthew Chapter 25; Galatians 6:2.

Christ is in the human needs expressed about us. We meet Christ there.

Be specific, direct and personal in your giving. Let the children give. It helps them.

(Westminster will have a "Childrens Memorial garden" that will remember the babies and children who died in the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.)

Pray Martin Israel's prayer and read Philippians 4:13.

TRIUMPH OF TENDERNESS

The soft subtle hands of God bring forth creative good from suffering's anguished womb.

Ask not the fruitless question of why, Ask rather the fruitful question of how Contractions of life can dilate the spirit.

Feel the motion of the Hands -- The grace, the skill, the love. Move with the movement: Infuse your feet, your hands, your eyes, Your tongue, your heart, your mind With softness and subtlety.

Bring to life: Reassuring calm out of whirlwind emotion, Resurrected meaning out of crucified hope, Honest healing out of paralyzing pain, Unsuspected courage out of raw despair.

Fear not the torment of pain: In the hands is tenderness, In the womb is perfection.

The soft, subtle hands of God bring forth creative good from suffering's anguished womb.

See the vision of the growth, Hope the triumph of the love, Help the creation of the good, But above all Live the dexterity of the hands.

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THE HEALING GRACE OF YOUR LOVE

Let the healing grace of your love, O Lord, so transform me, that I may play my part in the transfiguration of the world from a place of suffering, death and corruption to a realm of infinite light, joy and love. Make me so obedient to your Spirit that my life may become a living prayer, and a witness to your unfailing presence.

(4.23.95 Pastoral Prayer at W.P.C.)

(6)

Lord of Heaven and Creator of all that is: Often, Often, Often we behold the beautiful Oklahoma skies of your envisioning ~ Magenta swirls of vapors framed in cerulean blue ~ Reminding us of the wideness of your care, and the height of your unlimited mercy.

We walk happily on the burnt amber ground, The Red Earth, that has been traversed by tribes and peoples from all the global neighborhoods. Our foot steps follow the foot points of Indian brothers and sisters who worshipped you, Great Spirit, and revered all things great and small.

Then This Week — The black cloud of hate filled our sky, The raging blast of wickedness viciously tore apart our dreams,

our babies,

our beloved companions of life.

We are spinning downward into the dark vortex of emptiness — lightless, bottomless pit of emotions never known.

Can we be saved? Can we be safe? Can we be sure?

~ Now we hear a voice — "I am with you, Fear not, I will never, no never forsake you." Now we see a lamp — "The light of hope for a darkened pathway." Now we feel the touch — "The Everlasting Arms." Lord God you are here — in our pain, suffering, and death. Here, in Oklahoma. ~ Amen.