

April 28, 2020

Dear Friends,

It's almost incomprehensible, but I learned that my nephew Patrick (yes the same name as my brother who died) is in the hospital with COVID19. Patrick is the son of my brother James who lives in VA. To think that my family could lose our two Patricks in one month, it's surreal, it's overwhelming. This has all slammed me square in the face. I sincerely hope and pray that people are taking this virus very seriously. As I write this, however, Pat is gratefully doing well and stable, but we all now know that this virus is insidious; it can take a drastic turn in a very short amount of time. It also has a tendency to come back around after someone has been feeling well. Patrick's brother Jimmy died in 2004, his siblings, his dad who feels so far away, and all of us are quite shaken with fear that we could face such catastrophic loss again. We are all praying, I am certainly praying non-stop. But that seems like it's all we can do.

I can so very much relate to what Dr. Wolfelt is saying in today's reflection in *Grief One Day at a Time*: "it's normal to be depressed... The depression of grief... forces us to turn inward, withdraw and regroup. We need this time of depression to acknowledge the reality of what has happened and to embrace our pain." So... that and praying is pretty much all I can do right now except eat, clean, and shower (if I feel like it). I have to say, when I allow myself time to cry and release, it really does help me to feel better as I strive to find distractions around the house. I miss the huge yard that I had growing up; all I have now is a small deck. But I am immensely grateful to have that believe me! I'm finding a lot of gratitude for my home, for what I have, for my family, my friends, for nature and so very much right now. I'm finding crossword puzzles and other online games are proving to be very helpful distractions. Writing about it here is helpful, so thank you for listening. I'm also very much enjoying reconnecting with some of the groups that I facilitate on Zoom. More and more people in our groups are sharing that they now know someone who has been directly affected by, or even died from COVID19. We are helping one another shoulder the burden of these losses and that really helps when you feel like your shoulders just can't take much more weight. As wonderful as the Zoom groups are, they certainly are no replacement for our actual, physically being together. As one person put it this week, "I miss walking into Stephy's Place and feeling all the love that permeated the room." I think that pretty much captures what we all miss. In the meantime, please be aware that love can never be contained by any room. Love can't be contained by anything. It's love that got us all into this grief thing and its love that will eventually bring us to a new springtime. But as the weather and the pandemic are currently dictating, - we just aren't there yet. We'll get there. Hold on, stay strapped in and take good care.

God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can and the wisdom to know the difference.

Peace and Serenity, Kevin