

CARRYING ONE ANOTHER'S PAIN

AWAKE

Prepare for our devotion by engaging in the Christian mindfulness practice [here](#).

John Lennon of The Beatles, during his solo career, wrote a song entitled GOD. It began by saying, “God is a concept by which we measure our pain.” While the three Abrahamic faiths—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—insist that God is more than a concept, pain awakens us to life more urgently than anything else. What you do with your pain, be it physical or psychological, suggests that it can be shared with God (through prayer) as well as with others (through relationships of trust). As pain of any kind awakens you today, what are the ways that God, family, friends or community carry your pain? And in what ways do you carry the pain of others?

AWARE

While the crucified Jesus is the ultimate expression of God’s suffering for Christians, we are, in turn, asked to be “imitators of God” (Ephesians 5:1). During this pandemic, when pain is deeply felt by all, are you aware of the healing role you’re playing with others as you imitate Christ’s suffering?



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ALIVE

An inspirational poster in a student life center read, *"As long as you feel pain, you're still alive. As long as you make mistakes, you're still human. And as long as you keep trying, there's still hope."* (Susan Gale)

As you acknowledge your pain, uncertainty and mistakes, the good news amidst the bad is that our Lord is with you and sees the depth of your present challenge. Jesus said, *"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."* (John 10:10, NRSV).

There is an inner reservoir of the Holy Spirit to help you be fully and abundantly alive with strength, hope and courage beyond all understanding.

In what ways can you mindfully, prayerfully lean into the pain you carry and sense God's abundant life stirring within? As thoughts, memories and sensations surface, observe them with a quiet mind and, if you like, write what is speaking to you in your journal or on this devotion by downloading the PDF and printing or writing in the fillable text field provided.

ABIDE

We are created to be connected to others and to the Creator of all that is. The metaphor Jesus used to encourage trust in our connectedness was that of a vine: *"Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me."* (John 15:4, NRSV)

What is the fruit of the pain you carry so faithfully? List the ways that you also abide deeply rooted in the Lord of abundant life.

ARISE

Arise to a deeper, more abundant life in the midst of challenge. Today we were nudged beyond our personal pain in order to imitate Jesus's suffering servanthood by carrying the pain of others.

- Practice the Christian mindfulness exercise daily.
- Check in with your partner or virtual group.
- Continue to make contributions to your journal.

Write your reflections here

