

Daily Devotional, June 11, 2021 A Church Separated, Yet United

It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting, for death is the destiny of everyone; the living should take this to heart. Frustration is better than laughter, because a sad face is good for the heart. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of pleasure. Ecclesiastes 7:2-4 (NIV)

We've missed out on quite a bit these last many months. I have especially felt a measure of sorrow for those whose weddings have been postponed, whose graduation ceremonies were postponed or not what they envisioned, funerals and memorial services delayed and many more. There are so many events that should have happened, but have either been changed or cancelled.

One event on my mind today, was our Annual Metro Chicago Synodical Conference that took place this past Saturday morning. Some might say that the Metro Conference hasn't been as great over the last several years because of the smaller numbers. However, the Metro Conference is also the place we celebrate the many wonderful things that are happening in the church. It is a chance for clergy and laity to see one another in one place, who typically live at a fairly great distance from one another.

The Annual Metro Conference is when we celebrate those whose ministry has come to a close with retirement, and invite into ministry those who have been called and are about to be commissioned and ordained. These events still happen, but like other events this year it wasn't the same on You Tube live.

The conference would have been a time of gathering, and celebrating, as well as debating, and working towards resolutions. My heart is a little sad to miss this time of gathering, however, as I pay attention to the words in Ecclesiastes, the sadness of the heart is where it is made glad and wise. In our current sadness, I realize that we in the church aren't arguing over the same issues as we have in the past few years. Instead we are working together to see that the church continues in a time of coronavirus, as well as sharing resources to make sure we stay connected with the most vulnerable. I also see the church coming together to take a stronger stand against systematic racism, and in our sadness over not being able to meet together face to face, we have been moved to a greater action of brother and sisterhood.

Yes, we can be saddened by many things, we can be mournful, but we must remember that the Lord turns our mourning into dancing and calls our hearts to look up. For things are slowly getting better, will get better, and God is leading us to rejoice again. And maybe in our rejoicing we can forget about those things that have previously divided us, have separated us from each other, and work to make a better world for all of us, by focusing on the things that unite us instead.

Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus, You are our Prince of Peace and You prayed for unity in Your body, that we may be united in love just as You are united with the Father in love. Give Your children the desire to love one another as You have loved us, and let the world know that we are Your disciples by our love for one another. Give us a hunger to live in union with each another, and may we be united as one, in the bond of peace and fellowship in Your Spirit. This we ask in Your name, Amen.