

Oct 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Let us pray.

O God of Love, O God of Truth;

Let us say strong things gently and gentle things strongly.

Let us speak the truth in love to all  
and love the truth that lives in each.

Let us hear the truth as we each need it and live that truth.

O God, we heed it through Jesus, Your Word & our Lord.

Amen.

### **Sorrow And The Holy Spirit**

*John 14:25-28*

*“I have said these things to you, while I am still with you. But the “Comforter” - the Holy Spirit - whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give you (peace) as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid.”*

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Our dear friend, Muriel Roethe died last Sunday.

Her kind and gentle spirit will be deeply missed by all.

And personally, she was part of the Search Comm.

who hired me 25 years ago,

so I'll always cherished that close bond.

Her funeral will be October 18<sup>th</sup> at 3:00,

which will make the 11<sup>th</sup> funeral in eleven weeks.

So today, I decided to preach on sorrow.

Also, a recent survey found that 90% of Americans believe there is a mental health crisis in our country. And depression is one of their greatest concerns, especially in young people. And 30% say they are depressed because of the nastiness of our national politics. So today, I decided to preach on sorrow.

Also, with the daylight hours growing shorter and the temperatures getting chillier, that annual affliction called Seasonal Affect Disorder, better known as S.A.D. is setting in. So today, I decided to preach on sorrow.

And at our last Cabinet meeting, we offered Steve Longley a call to ministry to initiate and supervise a new pastoral counseling cntr. here at the Dorset Ch. So, I decided to preach on sorrow and it's spiritual healing.

And finally, on this Sunday each year, when leaf-peekers fill our town and inns and B&Bs and some find their way to Dorset Church, we celebrate Robert Frost Sunday. Certainly, because Frost is noted for his poetry about all our Vermont seasons:

The Road Not Taken celebrates Autumn.

Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening captures Winter

His poem Birches is filled with the energies of Spring.

And Hyla Brook describes the hazy, lazy days of Summer.

But some of Frost's best poetry is about sorrow

And my favorite is entitled, My November Guest.

*My Sorrow, when she's here with me,  
Thinks these dark days of autumn rain  
Are beautiful as days can be;*

*She loves the bare and withered tree;  
She walks the sodden pasture lane  
Her pleasure will not let me stay.  
She talks and I am fain to list:  
She's glad the birds are gone away  
She's glad her simple worsted gray  
is silver now with clinging mist.*

*The desolate deserted trees  
The faded earth, the heavy sky,  
These beauties she so truly sees,  
She thinks I have no eye for these,  
And vexes me for reasons why.*

*Not yesterday I learned to know  
The love of bare November days  
Before the coming of the snow,  
But it were vain to tell her so,  
And they are better for her praise.*

Frost approaches Sorrow very much like Jesus.

“*My Sorrow, when she’s here with me*” his poem begins.  
And that is reminiscent of Jesus’ own attitude toward  
Sorrow.

*Very truly I tell you, said Jesus. you will weep and mourn...  
You will have pain, but your pain will turn to joy...*

Sorrow is a fact of life.

Jesus was saying to his disciples,

“You must face your sorrow head-on.

You can’t run away from it.

You must grasp it as part of Reality.”

The cross reminds us of the sorrow of Jesus.

But do you know the sorrow of Robert Frost?

Robert Frost’s had 6 children.

4 died before him.

1 died of cholera, 1 of suicide, 1 at childbirth  
and 1 DURING childbirth.

And one of his living daughters was institutionalized  
for mental illness.

And his wife died of cancer late in Frost’s life.

But Frost’s sorrow started long before that.

Both his parents suffered from chronic depression.

He flunked out of university.

He failed at being a farmer after several tries in  
New Hampshire and Vermont.

Oh yes! Frost knew the reality of sorrow,  
just as Jesus did.

And many of us know sorrow too.

- When sorrow takes on a life of it's own  
(As it does in Frost's poem)  
and we are no more in control of it,  
but it infiltrates our homes and surroundings.
- When everything that used to be beautiful in life  
turns ugly and makes a mockery of beauty.

*The desolate deserted trees*

*The faded earth, the heavy sky,*

*These beauties she so truly sees,*

Frost reminds me of that poem by W. H. Auden

*"Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,*

*Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone.*

*Silence the pianos and with the muffled drum*

*Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come..."*

Yes! Frost understood Sorrow firsthand,  
but a minor miracle happened to him.

Remember his title: "*My November GUEST*".

Sorrow was only his visiting guest.

Alas, for so many victims, Sorrow IS NOT A GUEST.

It is a permanent resident.

Sorrow moves in and live with certain people  
rooting itself in their hearts and souls.

Sorrow becomes their jailor of a life sentence  
rather than JUST A GUEST.

There are those whose main topic of conversation is Sorrow.

There are those who live the life of a victim seeing in others and the world around them suspicion, conspiracies, lies and doubt. Sorrow is their familiar friend.

Whereas spirits like joy, happiness, hope and trust are the strangers.

As I analyze our political landscape in America, I think one plausible diagnosis for many in our country - both on the right & left - all who see life through the lense of victim - is Sorrow. Indeed, Sorrow may be the spiritual root cause of Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> - because, for many people, anger is sorrow in disguise!

I believe Sorrow, for so many in our nation, isn't just a visiting guest, it is a constant resident who never leaves.

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The question is, how do we avoid that? How do we keep Sorrow as only a guest and never a resident?

And this leads us to the wisdom of this morning's scripture lesson and the words of Jesus:

*“I have said these things to you, while I am still with you.  
But the “Comforter” - the Holy Spirit -  
whom the Father will send in my name,  
will teach you everything  
and remind you of all that I have said.  
Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.  
I do not give you (peace) as the world gives.  
Let not your hearts be troubled  
neither let them be afraid.”*

For Jesus, sorrow isn't just an occasional guest,  
Sorrow is an opportunity!  
Sorrow is the portal for the Holy Spirit  
to enter and deepen your life.

The Greek word for Holy Spirit is *paraclete*.  
It is a beautiful, powerful multi-faceted word.  
It can mean “comfort” as interpreted in today's  
bible version; but it can also mean  
“counselor, teacher, advocate”.

Jesus is saying is don't just fight Sorrow, learn from it.  
In *My November Guest*, Frost confesses  
he has learned from Sorrow.

*Not yesterday I learned to know      But it were vain to tell her so  
The love of bare November days      And they were better for her  
Before the coming of the snow,      praise.*

He's not exactly clear WHAT he learned.

Was it the value of Love?

For the power of love is at its best  
when life is at its worst!

Was it merely to have survived Sorrow at all?

Or, as Harold Duarte-Bernhardt once said.

**“We are all broken and wounded in this world.**

**But some choose to grow strong at the broken places.”**

Did Sorrow force Frost to look at his entire life  
and see the patterns he has been living and reliving,  
and finally decide to stop living sorrowful?

And thus, forever more, Sorrow would only ever be  
a “Guest” not a resident!

But Jesus is more clear than Frost.

It's not about WHAT to learn  
but FROM WHENCE to learn it!

*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.*

*I do not give you (peace) as the world gives.*

*Let not your hearts be troubled  
neither let them be afraid.”*

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In closing, if I were to carve a motto for a sign to hang  
above our pastoral counseling center it would be this:

**“Peace, not as the world gives” .**



Now please don't get me wrong,  
secular counseling can be very effective.  
It can bring it's own version of peace,  
and we need more of it and without stigma.  
And medication for depression and other mental health  
maladies can surely offer salvation.

But there is a peace that surpasses that of the world.  
And that is the remedy I hope and pray people may find  
in our new pastoral counseling center.  
A peace that allows Sorrow  
to only ever be a visiting guest in our lives.  
The peace, not of a human spirit, but The Holy Spirit.

## **Frost Poem leading into Unison Confession**

*Seek not in me the big "I" capital,  
nor yet the little dotted in me seek.  
If I have in me any "I" at all,  
tis the iota subscript of the Greek  
So small am I as an attention beggar.  
The letter you will find me subscript to  
is neither alpha nor omega,  
but upsilon - which is Greek for You.*

Prayer of Pastoral Care October 9, 2022 Dorset

Psalm 66 proclaims, "Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth: sing the glory of his name." Today's prayer response is: God of compassion, **hear our prayer.**

God of our salvation, you are the source of wisdom and joy. Your love and mercies are not limited to one time or to one people. You continue to heal and to save, transcending the boundaries and barriers we set. For your expansive love, it is our right, duty, and Joy to offer you all our thanks and praise. We bless you, O God, for your power: in mighty deeds and tender mercies. We bless you for your healing presence in sickness and in brokenness

God of compassion, **hear our prayer.**

We pray to you for the needs of the world: for those under political, military, or social oppression. Our prayers are with all in Ukraine, and also those in Russia, caught up in the current war. We pray for women and others in Iran, and for those in Afghanistan fearful for their security. We pray for those women in the United States who have no freedom of reproductive choice. Be with all suffering from violence and illnesses we can prevent, and for those at risk from famine, drought, and natural disasters. We pray for refugees, including many from South and Central America, and those who work with them.

God of compassion, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the renewing of creation: for an end to wasteful and greedy actions that endanger our earth, for heightened care for species at risk, and for more faithful stewardship among us toward earth's resources. We thank you for all who live and work to protect our world's climate for the human family as well as for the rest of creation.

God of compassion, **hear our prayer.**

We pray to you for the cares of our community: for any who are hungry today and will be again tomorrow, for any who are troubled in mind, body, or spirit, and for those in recovery. We pray for those suffering from the ongoing challenges of addiction, and give thanks for those who bring resources of healing and stability. Heal us, we pray, in our dis-eases, estrangements, and in the broken places of our lives. May we return to you, to creation, and to community in joy and thanksgiving according to your grace. God of compassion, **hear our prayer.**

We lift before you those on this church's immediate needs list. ...  
Give us fresh courage and bold vision in these changing times, as we pray for the welfare of all people. In the name of Jesus who came to heal and to save. Amen.

## OFFERING

As we offer to God our gifts, let us also offer unmeasured praise.

## \*DOXOLOGY and \*DEDICATION

We praise and glorify your name, O God. Make of us, as well as our gifts, offerings of good news to the poor, hope to the hopeless, and signs of your power to reconcile and redeem. In the name of Christ. Amen.

