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It's not too late to pray By Elise L. Moore

WHEN I HEARD OF the tragedy in Littleton, Colorado at Columbine High School, it was almost more than I could bear. The flood of violence in the world seemed too much. I pray for violent inclinations to be detected and stopped and for disasters to be prevented. What good would it do to pray now?

Then I thought of Jesus' followers, Peter, James, and John. Before his crucifixion, they must have sensed the impending flood of violence that would sweep away their beloved Master. Jesus asked them to pray with him. They slept. From our position in history, we know that Jesus wasn't asking them to pray to prevent his crucifixion. Then why did he ask them to pray?

As the answer dawned on me, I realized that here was the reason to pray when tragedies have already occurred. Jesus asked the disciples to pray to help him feel a sense of comfort, strength, and assurance that no matter what the circumstances, God was with him. Although the disciples failed to support him, Jesus was strengthened and comforted directly by messages from God. God would not leave him comfortless during his highest sacrifice. Jesus' need was met. On the cross and in the tomb, God never left him. And Jesus realized so thoroughly the unquenchable presence of divine Life that he rose from the grave. He promised that at some point everyone would learn that death is not final. Everyone will awake to know the truth of eternal life and the love of God.

Whether I pray or not, God will make His presence tangibly felt to the dazed and grieving. But I want to learn from the experience of the disciples. I don't want to sleep through the moments when others desperately need to be comforted and feel God's love.

The comfort of God is a gentle presence that touches the hand and relieves the heart. God comforts us "on every side" (see Ps. 71:21). In a way, God's comfort cannot be logically explained. It is a divine influence that reaches through the chaos of human emotions, to lead to a peace and inner stillness that is always within us.

The “divine influence” is “ever present in human consciousness,” wrote Mary Baker Eddy in the Preface to “Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures.” This deep-seated calm is always within human consciousness. Comfort is not from without, it is a welling up of an inward spiritual sense. Whether we sense the comforting peace of God intuitively, or through faith, or through seeing evidence of God's care in the compassion of others, it is tangibly felt.

When we pray for others to feel God's comfort, we're really praying that the spiritual sense of being silence the material. I often think of this in regard to Revelation 8:1: “And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.” There are many interpretations of this verse. But I find great comfort in thinking that when the final seal of sin and error is opened, the spiritual sense of being is seen to be supreme. With this revelation of God's supremacy, all things material fall silent. They have nothing to say. All lamentations cease. To me this represents the cessation of grief and the feeling of comfort from God.

Thoughts from God - angels – come to us when we pray: and those whom our prayers rest upon feel their presence as well. It's not time that heals, it's feeling the comfort from God. Whether it comes in a moment or a month or a year, release from grief comes only from glimpsing the spiritual sense of being, our eternal life with God. Prayer can mentally wrap the suffering heart in the arms of divine Love and help it feel the spiritual presence of God more quickly.

My prayer Tuesday night for all those grieving in Colorado and Serbia and any other community in the world was in the words of Paul (II Cor 1:3, 4): “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”