



**September 29, 2013**  
**Twenty-sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time**

*PSALM 13:2-4*  
*How long, O Lord? Will you utterly forget me?*  
*How long will you hide your face from me?*  
*How long shall I harbor sorrow in my soul,*  
*Grief in my heart day after day...*  
*Look, answer me, O Lord my God...*

Dear Friends;

All of us have been touched this week by the tragic death of twelve-year-old, Burgess Hu. His death outside of Excelsior Middle School was a tragic accident. We grieve with Burgess' family, friends and classmates and everyone at Excelsior School. We also grieve for the driver of the car and his/her family. It could have been anyone driving that morning that could have had the accident.

This week the pastors of Byron United Methodist Church, Delta Community Presbyterian Church and I went to the Boy Scout troop of which Burgess was an active member. He was fondly remembered and loved. I reminded everyone that the reason we are in pain is because we loved. The pain reminds us of our love and so it becomes bittersweet. There was also a demonstration of love from the community at large at the Candlelight Vigil.

When we face tragedy we are faced with the underlying brokenness of our world. We want to make sense of it but the thing is accidents are senseless. And we are also confronted with the reality that no matter how hard we try to prevent bad things from happening they still happen. And then we try to second guess our actions and we begin to question why did this happen? Where is God in all this?

It is natural and normal for us to have all kinds of questions, thoughts and feelings when we are confronted with tragedy. Part of the healing process is to acknowledge these things.

At such times we also look to our faith to give us insight and meaning. Our Christian faith tells us that our world is broken—bad things happen, people have accidents, we sin. But our faith also tells us that Jesus is God come in human flesh. As one like us Jesus faced that great mystery of suffering and death on the cross. But because of Jesus' love for God and us his suffering was transformed into new life.

What Jesus is teaching us is that we cannot necessarily escape the tragedies of life. But if we can bear them with love we can be changed. We also look forward to the day when the Reign of God comes in its fullness and there will be no more pain, suffering and death. In the mean time we work in love to alleviate the suffering of others. We work to change our world by our love.

Some of the ways that we might transform this tragedy is to renew our sense of the preciousness of all lives, especially our children. We need to recognize each day how precious is each person and every moment.

We might be more mindful of safety on the roads in town—slow down follow the speed limit and pay attention to the road. We might also advocate with the county to improve our roads. They are not safe for pedestrians or bicyclists there are no sidewalks, trails or bike lanes. These roads were not designed for the volume of traffic nor the speeds with which vehicles travel. We need to make our roads here safer for vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians!

Keep Burgess, his family and friends in your prayers. And together in the words of the Psalm writer let us pray:

*...Give light to my eyes that I may not sleep in death...*  
*Let my heart rejoice that he has saved me;*  
*Let me sing of the Lord, "He has been good to me."—Psalm 13:4&6*

Peace,

*Fr. Ron*