

Oh Holy Spirit, come be with in and amongst us. We need you right now. Come be our comforter as we find ourselves in this long journey of grief individually and collectively. The feeling of loss is palpable as we grieve our sense of safety in a benevolent world that now feels shattered. We feel destabilized with this crisis not only shaking our faith in systems of this world but for some of us, with our faith in you.

We grieve unimaginable acts of violence toward loved ones and strangers. For the deep groanings and aches of a broken world. For the injustice of hatred toward self and others and when one's fight with fear or abandonment consumes.

We grieve with deep sorrow for those who are sick or dying and the fear of being alone. For the loss in not experiencing the ritual of saying goodbye or hearing words of love. And for those who long to comfort their loved ones, the anguish of being denied the instinct to comfort and hold those we cherish. For health care professionals who reach into the depths of death and offer solace as one breathes their last breath.

We grieve weddings, trips, and family reunions that are canceled or altered. The longing to embrace others, have communion with the village of our church, for our ordinary lives.

May you comfort us in our weeping, when we want none of this, or when we stare plaintively out the window as it all feels too heavy. Help us to know that you are with us and that it is okay to not be okay - to seek and find the solace that you have promised.

Holy Spirit, come bring your wisdom and be the Advocate. For governments who are putting profits over people. For scientists who are working to understand this virus and to find an antidote. For all those involved in caring for our elders – that a light would illuminate the betrayal of their last years. For creative research studies in which physicians are using science and also the power of prayer to seek and understand healing. For the church in making itself relevant to those who are wondering, scared, or hungry – feeding body and soul. May our love of neighbor be more potent than any virus. Help us to see what we can offer from our love.

Holy Spirit come bring your hope. For the gift of art and music that nourishes us with words, sounds, and colour. For moments of stillness and silence, sun and rejuvenation that brings life to our bodies and spirits. For children's laughter, finding rainbows, making pancakes, and scraped knees – for these moments of normalcy. How we delight in things of significance. For the slow lifting of restrictions- the tension of fear and cautious optimism this presents. For creative graduation ceremonies with pictures adorning the school yard and messages of care and connection from school staff. For gardens, green grass, the budding of leaves and flowers – an act of hope if ever there was one.

Holy Spirit, give us your peace. Promise to be with us. Lead us to places of rest and care, where we can drink your waters of trust. Renew our strength to not abandon the path of solidarity. Remind us that God is trustworthy because he gave us the gift of You. That we can find refuge and peace for you are with us.

May these words resonate deep within our bones – “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.”
Amen.

~ Written by Marcia Buhler