

Ascension 2013

Here are 2 pieces of Velcro – or the hook and loop system as it is now sometimes called. You need both parts to make Velcro work – put together they can hold anything from shoes closed, to pictures hung on the wall, to clothing – you name it you can probably close it or hold it with Velcro. The thing that bothers me is the sound it makes as the 2 halves come apart. Have you ever tried to be quiet taking it apart? Soon everyone within 100 yards can hear that ripping sound. Here in the silence of the convent, that sound is magnified even more. To me that sound is like a cry of anguish as one part loses its partner.

Now look at these 2 halves that I have separated – each apart from its mate. The truth is that without each other, neither one is much use. When they are apart there is no part of the second half left with the first. No part of the one lives on in the other. Apart they are just 2 separate pieces and no longer one.

But we are not Velcro. Human relationships are so much more complex. Together or apart we carry memories and thoughts about friends, spouses, partners or in some cases our enemies. In separation whether apart for hours, a day or longer, they are with us in some way. Friends share memories and stories of times together. When I am apart from my friends, I think of the times we enjoyed together and look forward to what we will share in the future. Photos or objects are reminders of times together. Not all are necessarily happy times but they were shared. A part of the other person is with me and a part of me stays with them. There is a bond between us.

There is a poem by an unknown author that gives insight into that special world of friends.

Reason, Season, or Lifetime

*People come into your life for a reason, a season or a lifetime.
When you figure out which one it is,
you will know what to do for each person.*

*When someone is in your life for a REASON,
it is usually to meet a need you have expressed.
They have come to assist you through a difficulty;
to provide you with guidance and support;
to aid you physically, emotionally or spiritually.
They may seem like a godsend, and they are.
They are there for the reason you need them to be.*

*Then, without any wrongdoing on your part or at an inconvenient time,
this person will say or do something to bring the relationship to an end.
Sometimes they die. Sometimes they walk away.
Sometimes they act up and force you to take a stand.
What we must realize is that our need has been met, our desire fulfilled; their work is done.
The prayer you sent up has been answered and now it is time to move on.*

*Some people come into your life for a SEASON,
because your turn has come to share, grow or learn.
They bring you an experience of peace or make you laugh.
They may teach you something you have never done.
They usually give you an unbelievable amount of joy.
Believe it. It is real. But only for a season.*

*LIFETIME relationships teach you lifetime lessons;
things you must build upon in order to have a solid emotional foundation.
Your job is to accept the lesson, love the person,
and put what you have learned to use in all other relationships and areas of your life.
It is said that love is blind but friendship is clairvoyant.*

— Unknown

I admit that I have taken that I have not always fully understood this or taken it to heart. I have often not known when to end a friendship or relationship and have hung on too long. In doing that I have denied the other person the joy of approaching their future in an unfettered way and also it usually winds up harming me in a way that could have been prevented. It can and has strayed into co-dependence. This type of ending is caused only by selfishness. Letting go at the appropriate time and in the best manner brings the most benefit to both parties.

So where am I going with all this?

All of Jesus' presence on earth was of divine seasons and reasons. No human could alter or divert his path though the disciples tried and prayed for a change in the course of events.

I see the Resurrection and Ascension as relationships, then letting go and new relationships arising - letting go and allowing the divine relationship to develop in a new way – a way never imagined by the disciples or anyone else – beyond all imagination.

At the tomb Mary is amazed that the gardener is Jesus – her teacher, mentor and the center of her life. Her desire is to touch Him and verify his presence but she is warned off by Jesus - she is ordered not to cling but to leave and spread the word about his resurrection to the others. In the time between the tomb and the Ascension, Jesus was present for a reason and a season.

The post-resurrection appearances were new and frightening experiences for the disciples – Jesus in a semi-human state – not all there and not all removed from their presence. Again Christ could not be held or detained. His time was temporary. He needed to move on to the Ascension – the disciples needed to let go so that the Holy Spirit could come.

This must have been one of the most difficult periods for the disciples – to have Him so close but not fully present – to have Him move in and out of their lives at random. This would be baffling and stretch the bounds of anyone's imagination and beliefs.

When he was here at Easter, Scott Hoogerhyde said that the point of the Ascension is for Jesus to leave so to show us where to go. To lower our gaze from the heavens to life around us – to see, listen and discern where God is here with us, leading us if we pay attention.

Do not cling, do not hold on too long, and do not be afraid to separate. It is only by doing so that we are able to grow and move on.

People of Galilee - why do you look toward heaven? Look all around you. See and feel God's presence. Your new relationship is everywhere as you are embraced by the Holy Spirit.