



Cherish All Children

Pray + Educate + Connect + Act

Wednesday Prayer – 6th Sunday after Epiphany

“Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.” Luke 6:20-21

Weeping and laughing are mysterious and complex behaviors. Babies laugh and cry before they develop speech. Laughing and weeping seem like emotional opposites, yet they are inextricably intertwined. Maybe you have laughed so hard you cried (like the emoji), or found your tears turn to laughter after you released some tension and gained perspective.

Have you ever noticed when you feel especially sad you prefer to withdraw from human company? A person who is crying in front of others may be embarrassed and try to hide their tears or isolate themselves. By contrast, laughing is a social activity. We love to laugh together with family and friends, not alone. Laughing together strengthens our human bonds.

Perhaps that truth is what lies beneath Jesus’ promise of turning weeping to laughter. The hope that a person who was cut off from others, experiencing loss, brokenness and isolation can laugh again through positive human contact, sharing joy with those around them. Wholeness is restored in community with others.

I think of how we all waited anxiously for reports in the first hours after Jayme Closs freed herself from her kidnapper. We wondered, “Will she be okay? Will she be able to smile—even laugh—again?” The release of the first photos of her with her trusted aunt and her dog gave us hope for her recovery. We know there will be many more tears, and we pray for her wholeness while in community with others.

Be aware of the social and emotional wellbeing—the weeping and laughter—of the youth in your community. Do they express an appropriately healthy range of emotions? Do you know a girl or boy who never seems to smile or laugh? Does that child need help that your faith community is able to offer in a safe, respectful way? Does your congregation provide pathways to connect during the times of weeping and then for turning weeping into laughter?

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Amen.

Written by Gay Gonnerman, lay faith formation minister at Lutheran Church of Christ the Redeemer in south Minneapolis, development officer for a non-profit agency, and Cherish All Children Advisory Board member.