

Ash Wednesday - February 17

"[Elijah'] went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life..."

1 Kings 19:4 (NRSV)

"At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Mark 15:34 (NRSV)

It's January 8, 2021, after midnight. I'm lying in a hospital bed. My back is aching, my legs are in compression hose, I can't find my call button and I'm wearing a heart monitor which I think has me chained to the wall. I'm miserable. I'm sinking into depression and wondering how I can end all this. I'm alone. I'm abandoned. I feel like death is the answer!

The door opens and a shaft of light beams across the room. A nurse asks how I am. "I'm miserable and want to die!" As we continue to talk, she takes the compressors off my legs, she assures me that my heart monitor is not attached to the wall, she puts the call button into my hand and says she'll get me some pain medication. I feel better.

God didn't abandon Elijah or Jesus, and God didn't abandon me either. Actually, I was given an opportunity to gain a bit of empathy for persons caught in depression and show how important light is and how interacting with a helpful caring person can be healing.

Overcoming real depression is not simple, but it can be helped when the dark debilitating isolation it drags people into is exposed to God's light and to caring persons who have the experience and wisdom to provide real help.

Dave

Prayer: Loving God, for those experiencing depression, I pray that they may be guided to your light and to caring experienced persons who can give them hope through care-filled listening and helpful actions. Amen.