

This page will offer monthly reflections on soul-stirring encounters evoked by the author's everyday life experiences and invite readers to contemplate their own related experiences.

February 2008

It happened unexpectedly. A woman I've known since childhood and I were doing some "catching up" in my home-- talking, laughing, reminiscing, imagining where life was going. Gradually I sensed her retreating inward--quiet, withdrawn, heavy-hearted. How might I be with her, I wondered?



I joined her on the couch, sitting near her. Later I placed my hand on her hand. The pain and exhaustion of long years of going it alone while raising her children, now teenagers, began trembling into her voice, her lower lip, her chin, and then swam into the corners of her eyes. Unwanted tears rolled silently down her cheeks. More exposed than she intended she then dammed the emotional river with her brilliant, angry mind, speaking only of the whys and wherefores which explain her distress but do not heal it.

I reached toward her with clumsy, inadequate words; I wanted to invite her back into the river of feeling where we could stand together. Not here, not now, not today, her stiff silence declared. Gradually we moved on to safer ground and later said our good-byes.

Inside myself, I resolved to watch and pray with her. In the places of my own trembling and tears, I will remember her. When loneliness casts shadows over me, I will remember her. When my own mind dams the river of my feelings, I will be mindful of her. When I allow others to join me in the river of my own pain, I will remember her. When the river of pain is transformed into a river of living water, I will remember her.

You are not alone, good friend.

Reflection: What speaks to your heart and experience in this reflection?

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