

# To Everything There is a Season

As a young adult in the 1960's I was a big fan of folk music especially the Byrds' version of the Pete Seeger classic: *"To Everything, turn, turn turn, there is a season, turn, turn turn, and a time for every purpose under heaven."* I didn't recognize it as coming from the Bible (Catholics didn't study the Bible in my growing up years) but something about it rang true at a deep level.

Somehow we seem to believe that life should turn out according to the script we write for ourselves—and we often leave out the parts that involve suffering, loss, and pain and are angry and shocked when they do occur. My dad often told us that "everyone has his own sack of rocks to carry" that lead us to roads we would not have chosen. Surprisingly these paths often lead to richer lives as we are stretched to enter more deeply into the range of human experience.

COVID has been a great teacher. For a while, at least, we had a sense of being "in this together." We learned to adjust to wearing masks, click list shopping for groceries, visiting and working and Mass on zoom, and considering the health and safety of others as well as our own. And in the midst of this we grieved for friends we couldn't visit who died too young and things we had taken for granted—human touch, lingering meals with friends, being able to travel and praying in person with our church family. Suddenly these every-day things became ever more precious.

Like many others I haven't been with distant family in over a year. My son and his family live in Maryland and I had been accustomed to spending time with them every few months. That hasn't happened during COVID. My oldest grandson, now a sophomore in high school is over six feet tall (He was just a little over five feet tall the last time I saw him). Phone calls have been replaced by texts to him—but not too long or too often—after all, he's a teenager. When we finally get together again I know my hugs will be tighter and it will be hard to let go.

When things return to some sense of "normal" I hope we come to a season of gratitude for small acts of kindness, the selflessness of those who put themselves in danger to see that we were fed and stayed healthy, for the deepening sense of family and neighborliness we discovered, and even the constant hum of cicadas. May the gifts of silence, the melody of birds, the vibrancy of the bright blue sky, the kiss of wind on our faces and the realization that we are responsible to and for each other bring us thankfulness and hope for the future.

And as we enter into whatever season that lies before us may we remember that Jesus who promised always to be with us will walk with us and bring grace into every season.

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