***Thursday: Darkness only seems to Reign***

**Luke 22:39-53; Psalm 73 April 9, 2020**

***“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me;
yet not my will, but yours be done.”*Luke 22:42**

**Reading: Luke 22:39-53**

**Reflecting:**

This passage begins Jesus’ path on the *via dolorosa*, the path from the Mount of Olives to the cross. Not even too often conflicts in the Holy Land have been able to keep pilgrims for walking this path, especially during Holy Week. But this year, due to the threat of COVID-19, the *via dolorosa* stands quiet. Jesus’ prayer and conclusion, however, have not lost their importance. Jesus still shows us what it means to really pray “take this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done.”

Where did Jesus reveal to you the “full extent of his love” (see John 13:1) in the garden scene?

For Jesus, the “when darkness reigns” came in the form of swords and clubs and cross. How have you experienced “this hour”? What did you learn from Jesus about living when darkness seems to reign?

**Praying: Psalm 73**

*My flesh and my heart may fail,*

*but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.* Psalm 130:1-4

Just before Jesus left for the garden, he prayed for Peter, that his “faith may not fail.” Psalm 73 is a prayer for wisdom for the pilgrim whose feet had almost slipped and whose heart may fail. Tupps and I walked across some slippery ground in the forest lands today. That is never a good feeling on the trails or in the heart. The answer to this prayer is, for Asaph the psalmist and for us in a coronavirus world, living in the presence of God. As the psalmist prays, “it is good to be near God.” Pray this prayer with me as we, like Peter, enter into the final hours of Holy Week.

*Father, protect us from the slippery ground on which we too often find our feet. Keep our faith from failing so that we can encourage the disciples. Keep out feet from slipping so that we can enjoy your strength and portion.*

*Father, as your Son faced the reign of darkness, help us always pray ‘not my will, but yours be done.” Thank you for the promise of your nearness as we face trouble and for the comfort of your angels who still watch over those who cry out to you.*