

Interfaith Voices Column, October 2018

by Alice H. Rampton (598 words)

A Prayer for Peace

I yearn for peace in this world. It's been a forever desire. When my children were little, they would ask me what I wanted for Christmas. My annual answer was, "Peace, Love, and Respect." Those words hinted at the need for less noise and sibling rivalry within the walls of our home at the time. Today they extend to my community, nation and world. Our planet seems somewhat upended at this time. While visiting Ukrainian friends last month in Uzhhorod (Corvallis' sister city), many of them also noted a sense of concern over the world's instability.

As individuals, we can seek ways to further peace. It may be by voting for politicians who will promote peace, becoming involved in organizations that seek to further understanding, striving for peaceful communication and interactions within our own homes or standing up to bullies, wherever they may be. But I believe true peace comes when it is developed internally.

One of my favorite songs in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' hymnbook is called, "Where Can I Turn for Peace?" written by Emma Lou Thayne, an LDS poet. Her words express the search for inner-peace:

*Where can I turn for peace? Where is my solace when other sources cease to make me whole?
When with a wounded heart, anger, or malice, I draw myself apart, searching my soul?
Where, when my aching grows, where when I languish, where, in my need to know, where can I run?*

Who, who can understand? He, only One.

He answers privately, reaches my reaching in my Gethsemane, Savior and Friend.

Gentle the peace he finds for my beseeching. Constant he is and kind, Love without end.

When my heart feels wounded or angry, I can analyze the situation and discuss the problem with others. I can transfer my sadness or anger into healthy activities and service. These solutions bring a sense of external peace, but a unique sense of inner peace comes when I turn to Heavenly Father for guidance. There is strength in seeking for a higher power. This is not a crutch. It is an additional divine support offered to all. What parent doesn't want to help a child through a difficult time? So, it is with our Heavenly Father. He is there for us and He has sent his Son to show us true mercy and love.

Ten years ago, my son-in-law was in a Cleveland hospital with a ruptured esophagus. Our daughter was told that her husband's life hung in the balance due to infection. She called me heartbroken and beyond sadness. Nearly 2,500 miles from them, I felt frantic and helpless. Then I was overwhelmed with the need to fall on my knees and plead with the Lord for my son-in-law. The prayer brought me solace and peace. Fortunately, he survived. Perhaps he

would have survived whether I had prayed or not, but I can't deny the peace I felt. Another time, I prayed repeatedly for our 20-month-old daughter to overcome her battle with cancer. She did not survive, but, again, I felt a peaceful calm amid the agonizing grief that accompanies the loss of a child.

I believe Jesus Christ died for the sins of all humankind. I also believe his atoning sacrifice extends to our heartaches, pain, sorrow, disappointments, infirmities, betrayals, and injustices. He died that we might have peace as he exclaimed in John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Alice H. Rampton is a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. She co-directs a nonprofit for Ukrainian children through Corvallis Sister Cities Association, volunteers with the Benton County Historical Museum, and co-authored a book for grieving parents. She and Mark Rampton are the parents of seven children.