Columns
Spirituality



Migrants are seen outside a repatriation center in Guatemala City, Guatemala, after arriving on a deportation flight from the U.S. that landed at La Aurora Air Base Jan. 27, 2025. (OSV News/Reuters/Josue Decavele)



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One of the sobering learnings on our spiritual journey is that faithful living and fierce praying do not spare us from great disappointment or devastating losses.

Within the past few days, I have heard from several of my clients about receiving worst-case health diagnoses or experiencing overwhelming family turn-of-events. Meanwhile, many of us have friends and family — or are personally experiencing — the devastating widespread destruction of natural disasters: hurricanes, tornadoes or fires. And many witness shocking, unexplainable outcomes or events in national and world affairs.

When we love deeply, live tenderly, seek truth and serve generously, we can be stunned into silence by events that seem to shatter our ideals or convictions. When we strive to protect and support those we love — our families, the human family and our beloved planet — there are events that absolutely baffle us, stagger our understanding and bring us to our knees. We can feel ourselves slipping into great confusion, sadness or despair.

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Perhaps these times are actually our great soul moments in life. Perhaps these dark moments are, in fact, the times of singular light, when the soul receives the greatest lessons — the stellar invitations to deep transformation. As Barbara Marx Hubbard suggests, humans are stepping from *Homo sapiens* into *Homo spiritus*.

I believe that is the path for all of us, the point of our spiritual journey, our human adventure — to grow into a deeper level of consciousness, to learn to live from soul knowing. I believe this is what Jesus came to show us 2,000 years ago. And yet, when something stuns us — a turn of events beyond comprehension, a loss that feels staggering — we come to that desperate question: "Where *are* you, God?"

This morning, I walked in the cold sunlight, pondering this question, knowing many do not ask it today. Often, when we reach this question, we feel a certain loneliness in it. However, recent climate and other national disasters have brought many to this sobering, verge-of-overwhelm question. As I walked, this thought came to me: This Jesus I follow *knew* the confrontation of darkness. Yes, indeed! Today, I want to

meditate not on the *sacred heart* of Jesus but on the *broken heart* of Jesus. It is somehow comforting to ponder his experience of being brokenhearted.

"Have I been with you so long and still you do not understand me?"

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, I weep over you, yearning to gather you as a mother hen, but you refuse me."

"Father, let this cup pass from me."

"Father, forgive them. for they do not know what they are doing."

He faced his night at Gethsemane alone, in the dark, at the rock.



The Sacred Heart of Jesus is depicted in a stained-glass window at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Church in the Forest Hills section of the Queens borough of New York. (OSV News/Gregory A. Shemitz)

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He wept when his close friend Lazarus died — and surely when Joseph died; when they ran him out of the temple; when his own teachers called him blasphemous and possessed by Satan; when his mother suffered as he suffered. Jesus encountered the powers of blindness, natural disasters and the incomprehensible happenings in human life.

So, I turn to him, and ask for guidance. I'm still listening. The tutoring is just beginning, again. But I suspect it will have something to do with:

> It's time to retreat to the desert/wilderness to find God's strength and consolation in quiet prayer, in communion. I suspect the guidance will include *letting go* of what I cannot control, or prevent. Surely, there will be quiet, sobering lessons on *loving them as they are*.

But mostly, broken-hearted Jesus, I will hear, *again*, that you are with me, beside me, within me — and that will heal and sustain me.