

March 2024



Birth and Death Days

March is a season of birth day and death day anniversaries for me. This is the month a precious daughter came into our life and the same month my mom left this life. The process of giving birth and dying are eerily similar. There are stages of labor and stages of dying. Both bring a laser focus to the body. Both insist on complete surrender. Both bring intense emotion. The experience of giving birth and dying are the exact opposite. I was filled with hope and joy waiting for our daughter to be born and I can still feel the despair and sadness bringing my mom home to die.

We face these kind of opposing experiences, don't we? The feeling of deep gratitude for being in a warm home during a cold night, then simultaneously distressing over the homeless man down the street who has no where to go. Celebrating a friend's cancer free scan while sharing agony at the funeral of a coworker's thirty year old daughter. Visiting the cemetery with favorite flowers, then going to a birthday party with a special gift. Somewhere in the straddling of hope and despair, love and beauty transform.

I have felt closest to holiness in birthing and dying experiences. There is a thin veil between this life and the next. When you get close, it is like you are standing on holy ground. Nothing else matters. You are catapulted into pure presence. Here we can touch the holy of holies within ourselves. With laser focus, we can see the beauty of the moment and the love that envelopes us all.

My job gives me the honor of being in the holiest of spaces, where we are standing on soul's sacred grounds. Here, we share the hope and despair of what life and love bring. I am watching a grandmother become an advocate, a pastor become a poet, a mother's longings create a baby, a retiree become a matriarch, my interns become licensed, my children become their own heroes and dreams take flight. Together we are better sharing these important passages. Birth days and death days will always happen. And we will be transformed for the best through it all.