



Seeing with the Heart: A Guide to Navigating Life's Adventures, by Kevin O'Brien, SJ

Week 4--Chapters - 6 & 7 Living with Compassion and Living in Hope

Check in Question: Fr. Kevin refers to one of Fr. Greg's "homies" who said, "When I'm talking with someone I just don't like, I remind myself, 'This guy's mother loves him.' It often softens me into a corner." Describe a time when you were patient with someone who made you uncomfortable.

Opening Prayer

Lord, open my eyes to see others as You see them,
So that my heart may be moved with true compassion.
Teach me to respond with love in both word and action,
And to walk gently with all who are in need.
Bless our time together as we read, reflect, and share,
And guide our hearts to listen deeply to one another.
We ask this in your holy name.
Amen.

Reflection questions:

At the end of every chapter, Fr. Kevin suggests an Ignatian style of journaling through reflection questions. These questions may be helpful for personal prayer or for conversation within your faith-sharing group. However, we have also created a few additional questions that we hope will be especially fruitful for your discussion together as a group while journeying through Seeing with the Heart by Kevin O'Brien. For our faith-sharing time, select one or two questions that resonate with you and share your thoughts with the group.

Chapter 6: Living with Compassion: the Practice of Solidarity and Kinship.

1. *Splagchnizomai*, the Greek word for a compassionate response: When has God looked upon you with such compassion, or when have you shown compassion toward another?
2. The evangelist John says, "I give you a new commandment: love one another as I have loved you. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Have you ever witnessed this kind of love in the business world, or the world that you frequent? Please describe the experience.

3. Father Kevin suggests that we don't always get to choose who receives our charity. Can you recall a time when you chose to be charitable even though it was difficult?
4. Father Kevin quotes an old Irish adage: "We live in the shelter of another." When have you offered shelter or support to someone in need?
5. In his encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis encourages the Church to embrace poverty in order to learn from the poor and to act for justice. How could our parish, Holy Family, take up this challenge in practical ways?
6. Father Kevin says we often overvalue self-sufficiency at the expense of community. How do you see this reflected—or not reflected—in your own life?
7. Father Kevin invites us to live on the margins so that those on the margins aren't changed, but we are. In what ways do you feel called to change in the pursuit of justice?

For Grief

There are days when you wake up happy;
Again inside the fullness of life,
Until the moment breaks
And you are thrown back
Onto the black tides of loss.

Days when you have your heart back,
You are able to function well
Until in the middle of work or encounter,
Suddenly with no warning,
You are ambushed with grief.
(John O'Donohue)

Chapter 7: Living In Hope: Finding Meaning and Suffering and Loss

1. What is grief, if not love preserved?
2. Where do you find God in times of pain and suffering?
3. When wrestling with the old question, "Why do bad things happen to good people?" Father Kevin says that most people turn to a retribution model to describe God's role. Do you agree with Father Kevin that this is an inadequate answer? Why or why not?
4. Reflect on a time when you have experienced suffering—whether in the past or in the present. How has it affected you?
5. Jon Sobrino says, "In the cross there is great love, and love always creates hope." How does this statement inform your own experience of suffering?

6. In American society, we are often in a hurry to get here or there, to do this or that. Father Kevin suggests that “there is no rushing Easter” and that we should take time to befriend our suffering, allowing it to teach us its important lessons. How has this been true in your own life?

7. Richard Rohr says, “If we do not transform our pain, we will most assuredly transmit it—usually to those closest to us: our family, our neighbors, our coworkers, and, invariably, the most vulnerable, our children. We shouldn’t try to get rid of our pain until we’ve learned what it has to teach.” How have you seen this reflected in your life?

8. How are you a “resurrection person”?

9. Do you believe Heaven is around us more than beyond us?

Closing Prayer

For whom and what shall we pray...

For this closing prayer, we are going to do a little guided meditation based on Spiritual Exercise 219. To reflect and be aware of God’s presence.

- *Begin by lighting a candle as a visual reminder that we are gathered in God’s presence.*

- *Invite everyone to be still.*

- *The leader or facilitator will then read the guided reflection slowly. Faith sharers may choose*

to follow along with the text or close their eyes in quiet contemplation.

- *Encourage everyone to listen, reflect, and allow the words to speak to their own experiences*

of God, grief, resurrection and healing.

Sit comfortably and close your eyes. Take a slow, deep breath in... and out. Allow your body to relax. Let your thoughts settle, letting go of distractions. Feel your heart open to this sacred moment.

Pause

Imagine Mary, sitting quietly, her heart heavy with grief after the loss of her son, Jesus. Feel her sorrow, the ache of loss, the quiet tears. Sense the stillness around her, the memories that both comfort and wound her heart.

Pause

Now, imagine Jesus approaching. He is fully present, radiant with love and compassion. He does not speak first, but simply sits with her. Feel his gaze upon Mary, steady, tender, accepting. Let yourself imagine being held in that same gaze of love.

Pause

Hear Jesus' gentle presence: perhaps he takes her hand, or leans close, or simply allows her to weep freely. Imagine the comfort flowing from him—not words alone, but the depth of love, understanding, and peace.

Now, bring to mind your own sorrow or loss. Place it gently in this moment. Imagine Jesus' presence holding your grief, offering you consolation and peace.

Pause

Feel the warmth of his love filling your heart, bringing strength and hope. Imagine Mary feeling renewed, able to continue with courage. Reflect on how you, too, might carry this love into your life and share it with others who are hurting.

Pause

Take a deep breath, letting the love and consolation you have received settle in your heart. Slowly return your awareness to the room, gently moving your fingers and toes. Open your eyes when you are ready, carrying this peace and compassion into your day.

Next time: Our last session--Chapter 8