

Our world is collectively grieving.
Holding each other up in a virtual hammock of prayer
Embracing a kaleidoscope of feelings amid a myriad of losses
routines, worship, work, connection, security, freedoms
And most profoundly, thousands of lives
 Each one a single story
 a life unexpectedly ended
 setting into motion waves of emptiness and sadness.
We've been thrust into uncertain waiting
 in an unfolding saga with no script.
There are no shortcuts.
 We can't pole vault through the pain.
 We can't bypass the grief.
Our lives are different.
 Our world is changed
 And things will never be the same.



So name your pain.
Give witness to each other's grief without judgment
Surviving the pandemic will leave each of us
Forever changed in different ways.
Keep breathing deeply.
 Keep reaching out to others.
 We have not lost the ability to make meaningful moments.

Eventually we will utter a collective sigh
 Having escaped the hand of death of this indiscriminate disease.
It is then that our choices will take on new meaning.
For it will be within our power
 To put back into our lives only that which
 Truly expresses our values and lessons learned.
Much of what we thought we couldn't live without
 now put aside
 has birthed a deeper understanding
 of wholeness and happiness
 of respect for life ... all life ... not just my own.

Kathy Onderbeke, IHM