

## The Lone Duck

*"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."* ~Matthew 5:4 (ESV)

I saw the alligator in the lake next to the floating carcass of its prey. Every so often, he would toss it in the air like a circus seal nosing its ball into the air. I had no idea what the poor creature had been; even with the binoculars I could not discern it. All I knew it was like a bulb of meat with a thin neck. I believe it was one of the ducks.

My thoughts were confirmed when a single duck came to my feeder. It was one that had been in a pair just yesterday, when I saw them by the side of the pond. It had no flock, nor did it have its mate. There were no ducklings, and it just ate and waddled into the neighbor's yard and back down by the lake.

The gators were always lurking around, and I realize they had to eat, as we all do, but I'm saddened that a once happy pair was down to one lone duck. It looked so sad. As it aimlessly wandered across the back, it looked so lost.

Upon reading what happens to lone ducks, I learned that they mate for a season and then mate with another the next season. If their mate dies during the season they are together, they do mourn, then they move on because they are only seasonally monogamous. This lifted my spirits as I watched the lone duck, alert to the predators above (the hawks) and below. It was quick to quack, jump back, and fly away. This would be the key to its survival. With its new mate in the next season, perhaps a few ducklings will survive and produce more quick-witted, alert ducks.

Sometimes we need the solitude to grieve, think through our lives, and help us move forward. Even Jesus needed solitude to pray, reflect, and renew. However, sometimes it's easier to remain in that solitude because the world can be so nasty. Here we have to learn from the duck. We take time to mourn, then we move forward, trying to improve our world and species.

After these times of isolation, there will be a time for each of us to move on and move forward. Our jobs may look different, be different, and we will change. Yet, we need to reflect and see what we've learned about ourselves on this journey and make the efforts and strides to get out there and do the work God has given us to do.

For some, the path is clear; for others, including myself, we need to figure out what that work is. I pray that we find our way to improving our world, bringing joy to

others, and by promoting love. I pray that we move onto a bigger and better future as individuals and as a faith community actively doing the work needed to be done.

**Reflection:** What have you learned on this Lenten journey? What areas will you continue to nourish, and which shall you prune out? What part will you play in our congregational life as we all move forward? Close your eyes and picture yourself serving the Lord. Make that your goal.

**Response:** Take action based on your reflection. Find where God leads you and make a plan to do it. Look at your time, talents, and treasure and re-align them based on what you've learned in our Lenten journey.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me be content with the quiet without being complacent about the work you have given me to do. Get me going on the path to your will and wish for my life and reach out to those who are alone.

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is discord, union;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is error, truth;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy.*

*O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console:  
To be understood, as to understand;  
To be loved, as to love:  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
And it is in dying that we are born to  
eternal life.*