

Thursday - March 21

Blessed are those who mourn; for they shall be comforted. Matthew 5:4

Many people see cardinals after a loved one dies. It seems that God has blessed our family with the sighting of a Cooper's hawk upon the death of a loved one. In April of 2020, our nearly 14-year-old Golden retriever passed away. We made the decision to euthanize Crosby as he had completely stopped eating and could no longer stand up on his own. The passing of Crosby and the experience of euthanizing him was the hardest situation I had ever experienced in my life. I was truly devastated; it seemed impossible that my day-to-day shadow, companion and source of comfort, would no longer be by my side after 14 years of his presence. When we returned home without Crosby, wondering what to do next, God decided to break through from heaven to tell us that Crosby was ok and that we would also be ok. My husband happened to glance out the door to our back patio. There sitting on one of our patio chairs was a Cooper's hawk. This hawk was a beautiful, regal creature, and we had never before seen one in our yard, let alone right outside our door. The hawk sat there for a few minutes, swooped through our yard where Crosby used to spend time, and then was gone. We knew with certainty that that Cooper's hawk was Crosby's spirit or the Holy Spirit sent by God to give us peace in our sorrow.

A little over a year later in August of 2021, my mother-in-law passed away at the age of 65 after a few months of declining health. After a week spent in Pittsburgh for her funeral and trying to help my father-in-law get settled, we returned to Powell. My husband was outside grilling, as he tried to process the new reality of life without his mom here on earth. He silently asked his mom (or God) to please let him know that she was ok. He let the thought go, but a few minutes later came back inside the house and glanced out of the front windows. There on a bush in our front yard was a Cooper's hawk just sitting there looking at him. My husband experienced an overwhelming feeling that again this Cooper's hawk was sent by God for him in his time of grief.

Of course, the pain and sadness did not immediately dissipate in these situations when we saw "our" hawks, but we felt grateful that God blessed our family with a sign of comfort through these beautiful creatures. These two experiences helped both of us to move forward in our grieving process.

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Prayer: God, please help us all to see signs of your presence in our lives, and to remember that you are with us during difficult times. Amen.